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SUBSTANCE

OF THE

DEBATES

ON

THE BILL FOR ABOLISHING THE

Slave Trade,

WHICH WAS BROUGHT

INTO THE HOUSE OF LORDS

On the 2d January, 1807,

AND

INTO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

On the 10th February, 1807,

AND WHICH WAS

FINALLY PASSED INTO A LAW

On the 25th March, 1807.

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ACCOUNT

OF THE

PROCEEDINGS IN THE FIRST SESSION

OF THE

THIRD IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT,

RELATIVE TO THE

Slave Trade.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

FRIDAY, JAN. 2, 1807.

Lord GRENVILLE preſented a Bill, entitled, "An act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade," which was read a firſt time. His Lordſhip ſtated that all he propoſed at preſent was that the bill ſhould be printed, and lie on the table a ſufficient time to afford the opportunity of mature deliberation previouſly to its being diſcuſſed. He would therefore at preſent fix no preciſe day for the ſecond reading.

Lord HAWKESBURY, Lord ELDON, and the Duke of CLARENCE, ſaid a few words, which indicated an intention on their parts of oppoſing the bill in its future ſtages.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 4.

This day having been fixed for the ſecond reading of the Bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, the order to that effect was read; when it was agreed that the Petitioners againſt the bill ſhould be heard by their counſel. Counſel were accordingly heard, viz. *Mr. Alexander*, on behalf of the Liverpool Merchants; *Mr. Clarke*, on behalf of the Town and Corporation of Liverpool, as Truſtees of the Liverpool Dock; *Mr. Plomer*,

on the part of the Weſt Indian Planters and Merchants; and *Mr. Scarlett*, for the Planters and Merchants intereſted in the Iſland of Trinidad. Each of the learned counſel propoſed to call evidence to ſubſtantiate the caſe which he had opened to the Houſe; and, a motion having been made to that effect, their Lordſhips determined the queſtion in the negative. The grounds of this deciſion, in the propriety of which all parties in the Houſe appeared to concur, were, firſt, That it was unneceſſary to adduce evidence to prove the intereſt which Liverpool had in this iniquitous commerce: the bill aſſumed the exiſtence of ſuch an intereſt; and without ſuch an intereſt it would have been a very ſuperfluous meaſure of legiſlature. Secondly, That with reſpect to the Weſt Indian branch of the queſtion, the learned counſel had not propoſed to call witneſſes to prove any points which were the fair ſubjects of human teſtimony, namely, facts; but to expreſs under the ſolemn ſanction of an oath, their opinions and conjectural ſpeculations as to what would be the effect on the Weſt Indies of the law propoſed for aboliſhing the Slave Trade. Such a proceeding it was thought would be highly unbecoming the dignity of the Houſe, and incompatible with every received principle of legal evidence.

The hearing of Counſel having occupied the Houſe to a late hour, it was agreed to defer the ſecond reading of the Bill to the following day.

Thursday, February 5.

The order of the day for the ſecond reading of the Bill for aboliſhing the African Slave Trade having been read,

Lord Grenville roſe, and addreſſed their Lordſhips as follows.

" It is my intention on this occaſion, to bring before your Lordſhips a matter of the higheſt importance; but in doing this, I am ſenſible that I muſt of neceſſity paſs over a great deal of ground which has often been trodden; and I muſt ſubmit to your attention, much, even, that I have offered myſelf on the ſame ſubject. I hope the candour of your Lordſhips will allow, that if I dwell

dwell long on any department of the enquiry, the object in thus delaying my progreſs is, that I may omit nothing which can tend to give efficacy to this great project.

" And now, my Lords, in the firſt place, let me begin with laying down that which I conceive to be the ground-work of all the ſubſequent proceedings.

" I come, my Lords, to recommend to you, not what you may grant or reject at your diſcretion. I come before you, not merely to recommend a meaſure which is expedient, but one founded on principles which allow you no option of refuſal. Yes, I appear here at the call of juſtice, the claims of which you are bound to anſwer. My Lords, you are not only parties, but principals, in a concern where the greateſt injuſtice has been committed by which the annals of mankind can poſſibly be diſgraced. If, my Lords, I am able to ſhew this, I have done all that is neceſſary, or can be neceſſary, to influence your determination.

" I know, my Lords, that on this ſubject ſtrange notions of morality have been ſuggeſted, as if what were juſt to one race of the ſpecies, might be unjuſt to another. I know not, my Lords, on what principle of law, divine or human, ſuch ſentiments are founded. My Lords, I have been always taught to conſider juſtice to be one, uniform, conſiſtent, rule of conduct; ſo that it has been enough for me, to liſten to the proof that any particular acts are unjuſt, with reſpect to certain individuals or claſſes of the ſpecies, to convince me, that the ſame acts muſt be unjuſt to all the reſt of mankind.

" My Lords, I ſhall have occaſion to examine, as I proceed, this important doctrine of the impartiality with which juſtice ſhould be diſtributed; and I ſhall have to argue againſt the principle which, after accrediting itſelf by aſſuming the foundation of all moral virtue, denies the great maxim by which virtue is to be ſupported.

" Entertaining theſe opinions, I ſhould have been inclined, if I could have properly interpoſed, to have met, and to have anſwered, the argument of the learned and eloquent counſel yeſterday at your bar, (Mr. Plumer) when he made this appeal to your Lordſhips. ' If (ſaid he) ' you are to diſregard all the intereſts of trade, if, in

this great country, ſupported by its induſtry, I am not to talk of the vaſt ſpeculations of commerce, it will be my duty to retire from the preſence of your Lordſhips, for theſe are the only arms with which I am provided, for the defence of thoſe in whoſe cauſe I appear.'

" I am willing, my Lords, to take this ground, which the learned counſel has ſelected, as the ſpot from which he would oppoſe this bill; and I declare it to be my firm opinion, that it is utterly ſuperfluous to enquire into the profits or loſſes incident to the trade, or what degree of inconvenience, ſpeculative or practical, is likely to happen from its abolition.

" But, my Lords, although I acknowledge myſelf to be ready to meet the queſtion on that ground, let it not, therefore, be for a moment ſuppoſed, that thoſe who ſupport this meaſure, conceive it to be inimical to the ſound maxims of national wiſdom, and political expediency. I am perſuaded, my Lords, that if you will examine the allegations that have been ſo often repeated on this ſubject, not by illuſive theory, but by fact and experience, and by the matters of account before you which form the beſt criterion on which your deciſion can be given; you will irreſiſtibly be driven to the concluſion, not only, that there is no ground for the apprehenſions which have been indulged; but that if the trade were as equitable as it is unjuſt; if it were as fair and honourable as it is baſe and deteſtable; upon the ground of policy, *and of policy alone*, your Lordſhips would be bound to interpoſe your powerful authority, between the Planters and the certain ruin, to which, by the continuance of this commerce, they would be neceſſarily expoſed.

" My Lords, when firſt this queſtion became a ſubject of ſerious argument, great ſtreſs was laid upon an aſſertion, which has been ſince frequently repeated and as often confidently maintained, that, from ſome ſtrange eccentricity of nature, deviating from all her other eſtabliſhed laws, it was impoſſible in the Weſt Indies for the extent of population to be preſerved, without freſh ſupplies by continued importation. Such was repreſented to be the waſte of life in theſe remote ſettlements, and ſo familiar, by being frequently urged, has this propoſition been rendered,

dered, that it has been taken as proved, and adopted without farther examination. This aſſertion has not been made without reference to an important conſequence, affecting the enquiry reſpecting theſe eſtabliſhments; and it is this, that the neceſſary effect of the reduction in the population muſt be the progreſſive diminution of the culture, until, at laſt, the iſlands become wholly unproductive. It ſeems to be a propoſition which, at firſt ſight, repels the concluſion afforded by our experience of the hiſtory of mankind; and it is, at leaſt, a bold poſition, that while the reſt of the ſpecies, in every other part of the globe, were obedient to the mandate of the Divine law, *to increaſe and multiply*, it was the unhappy fate of the Negroes in the West Indies, to be incapable of ſubſerviency to this ſacred, and benevolent command. The learned counſel at your bar did not neglect to avail himſelf of this popular notion; and with a ſingular inconſiſtency, at the ſame time that he contended for the decreaſe of the population, he alleged, that the Slaves were treated with gentleneſs and humanity.

" I ſay, there was a ſingular inconſiſtency in the argument of the learned counſel. The reverſe of his propoſition muſt be the truth: for ſhew me a country where the population is not kept up, where man does not increaſe and multiply according to the deſigns of infinite benevolence, and there, I can fearleſsly affirm it, you will diſcover that the labouring claſſes are oppreſſed with exceſſive exertion; that they are not treated with that humanity, by the ſuperior orders, which their natural relation demands; for no other cauſe could prevent the imperious law which is enacted for the multiplication of the ſpecies.

" Is it then to be ſaid, when in delivering my ſentiments on this ſubject I proceed on the known and acknowledged laws of nature, that I am coming forward, not only to oppoſe the intereſts of certain members of ſociety, but to defame their character, and to pollute their honour? No, my Lords, I can have no ſuch purpoſe, while I am advocating, in your preſence, the injured rights of humanity; and while I am thus employed, I cannot ſo far accommodate myſelf to the wiſhes of others, as to admit a propoſition diametrically oppoſed to the eſtabliſhed order of things.

" I will

" I will admit, my Lords, that the proprietors and planters of eſtates in the Weſt Indies are deſirous that their Slaves ſhould be well treated, that they ſhould be cloathed and protected, and partake of the comforts of life. Yet how unreaſonable is it to expect, that their intentions ſhould be fulfilled, where deſpotic power is to be exerciſed over this laborions claſs, not indeed by them, nor by thoſe immediately under them; not even, perhaps, by thoſe immediately under theſe laſt; but by ſome deputy of the loweſt in the ſeries of ranks of ſuch a ſtate of ſociety above the condition of a ſlave? Thus ſituated, the firſt deſcription of perſons can only acquire information whether their Slaves be well treated, by the periodical returns they receive of the population on their eſtates, and which indicate the augmentation or diminution in this part of their eſtabliſhments. I am perſuaded, my Lords, that there is no criterion ſo ſure, none upon which they can ſo confidently rely.

" It is now fourteen, or, I believe, nearly twenty years, ſince the population of the colonies was examined in detail, by a perſon (Mr. Pitt) who, to all his other brilliant attainments, added that of being one of the beſt political arithmeticians; and he acknowledged the truth of the propoſition to which I have juſt adverted. I can witneſs the pains he took to ſatisfy himſelf as to the truth of it, for I was myſelf a ſharer in his labours. The reſult of theſe exertions ſupplied the moſt ſatisfactory proof of the propoſition, from the authority of ſuch documents as were unqueſtionable; documents ſupplied by the legiſlatures of the iſlands themſelves; ſo that no confutation could be given to it.

" In the courſe of theſe inquiries, he found, whatever might be the cauſe, that in the iſland of Jamaica, where the importations of Slaves exceeded all the reſt, at an early period, the population had been greatly on the decline; that this decreaſe was diminiſhing as the calculation approached nearer our own times, and that the occaſion of the large depopulation at the former period, was evidently the clearing of new lands, an employment which is peculiarly deſtructive to health: indeed it is well known, that the cultivation of the old lands is in no reſpect ſo injurious.

injurious. A few of the eſtimates will ſatisfy the minds of your Lordſhips, as to theſe facts. I will take them up from the century before the laſt. From the year 1698 to 1730, compriſing a period of thirty-two years, there was a decreaſe in the population of the iſland, on the average, of three and a half per cent. During the following twenty-five years, the diminution was two and a half per cent. From 1755 to 1768, compriſing fourteen years, it was one and three-quarters per cent. And from 1768 to 1788, (to which period the ſtatement was completed) the reduction on the ſame ſcale was not quite one per cent. It deſerves remark, that during the laſt fourteen years of this period, the decreaſe is only three-fifths per cent.

" Upon theſe important ſtatements was grounded an argument, to which no anſwer could be given; and it was aſcertained, that the allegations of the planters, ſo often repeated, were wholly unfounded, or founded only in an utter ignorance of facts of the greateſt conſequence, affecting the progreſſive improvement of their eſtates.—The truth is, that their attention had not been drawn, in any methodical way, to this ſubject, and, while they made a repreſentation which appeared to them to be correct, it was in reality in contradiction to the evidence afforded by *their own accounts*.

" My Lords, we are not deficient in the particulars requiſite to bring down the calculation nearly to the preſent time. Since the year 1788, with which the former eſtimate terminates, almoſt twenty years have elapſed, and upon the average of this whole period, down to the laſt three years, beyond which the accounts do not extend, there is no diminution at all, or, if there be any, it is ſo ſmall as ſcarcely to deſerve attention. We have accounts of eight pariſhes in the iſland of Jamaica, and, if my recollection ſerves me right, the deaths do not exceed the births more than one in one thouſand four hundred and fifty-ſix. In many of them, there is no decreaſe at all, and on the whole together not more than what I have juſt ſtated, about one fifteenth per cent. In another pariſh, not included in theſe eight, the liſt of births is equal to the catalogue of mortality.

" It is perhaps yet more remarkable, that in the iſland of

of Dominica, where a greater reduction might be expected, you have a ſtatement, which gives, during the ſame three years, an exceſs in the births. In this iſland, alſo, you have the number of males and females given, ſhewing the ſuperior number of the latter; and you will recollect, my Lords, that the inequality of the ſexes is one of the principal cauſes which the planters aſſign for the decreaſe of the Slave population, when unaſſiſted by importations from the African coaſt."

[His Lordſhip likewiſe ſtated what had been the returns from the iſlands of Montſerrat and the Bahamas, and drew thence the ſame favourable reſults. He then proceeded as follows :]

" Thus, my Lords, you have a direct contradiction to their confident aſſertions, and this contradiction is ſupported by irrefragable proof.

" For my argument, the mode in which the account is ſtated is the moſt diſadvantageous; for I have omitted to obſerve to you, my Lords, that theſe eſtimates of births and deaths include the newly-imported Africans, as well as the native Slaves. Who does not know of the prodigious loſs ſuſtained at the concluſion of Slave voyages? My Lords, between the time of their being brought into the harbours, and that of their being landed for ſale, there is generally a loſs of five out of a hundred of theſe wretched beings, who are thus ſacrificed to the mercenary ſpirit of our Slave merchants? Who does not know, that from various complicated cauſes, the recently-imported African is liable, in a tenfold proportion, to the ſtroke of death?

" If the calculations were made in the only correct way, not on the whole number of Negroes, but on the reſident and native Slaves, inſtead of any reduction in the black population of the Weſt India iſlands, you would have found an actual and large augmentation.

" My Lords, you are aſked by this bill, to prohibit the importation of new Slaves into the Weſt Indies; and it is a material queſtion affecting the policy of ſuch a meaſure, whether the native population of a country be ſufficient to continue the ſame number of labourers by which the ſoil has been hitherto cultivated. The object and aim to which all theſe eſtimates are directed, is to ſhew, that in the

the preſent condition of the iſlands, the population is ſufficient to ſupply itſelf. I am then entitled to ſay, that all the danger which has been apprehended, from the decreaſe of the Negro inhabitants, is completely diſproved; and that none of thoſe dreadful conſequences will happen, with regard to Weſt Indian property, which have been ſo confidently deduced from their progreſſive diminution.

" But there yet remains behind ſomething which has deen deſcribed as extremely important; and your Lordſhips were told laſt night, that freſh importations from Africa were neceſſary, for a purpoſe quite diſtinct from that of maintaining the population in its preſent ſtate, or of continuing the culture of the plantations to the preſent extent.

" Your Lordſhip's are aware, that a leſs number of hands is required to maintain a plantation already in an improved ſtate of culture, than to clear and cultivate new lands. But it is ſaid, my Lords, that the deſign you ought to have in view, is not only to preſerve the iſlands in their preſent ſtate of culture, but to bring into improvement all the waſte lands capable of receiving it, and for this purpoſe, an immenſe number of additional Slaves would be required.

" From the impreſſions of my own mind, I ſhould be ſatisfied to abandon all theſe vaſt projects of remote ſpeculation, in order to diſcontinue this nefarious trade; but I can eaſily conceive that there may be perſons, who would, with reluctance and pain, arrive at the ſame concluſion, if it were clearly eſtabliſhed that there would accrue a diſadvantage of this kind. But to allude to the ſentiment of a familiar proverb, there may be a loſs without injury; yet of this truth, it might be extremely difficult to perſuade thoſe who are anxious to carry into effect extenſive ſchemes of perſonal aggrandizement.

" The propoſition I ſubmit to the attention of your Lordſhips, is this; that the preſent ſtate of the cultivation of the iſlands may be maintained, without tranſporting one more African from his native country. I will advance a ſtep farther, and aſſert, that the cultivation, without ſuch aſſiſtance, may not only be maintained in its preſent ſtate, but may be extended. But, my Lords, ſuppoſing

it were otherwiſe, would you continue to ſanction this dreadful mode by which the baniſhment of theſe unhappy wretches is effected? Who is there, unbiaſſed by partial intereſt, that can reflect on this practice without horror and indignation?

" On the one hand, you are told, that the planter is, at this moment, labouring under difficulties with which he can hardly contend, and that the produce is carried to an extent much beyond what the markets can receive. If this be any thing like a correct view of the ſubject, there can be no motive for freſh importations, with a view to expand the cultivation. Would you, then, my Lords, accelerate the impending ruin, would you doom the planters to certain deſtruction, in order to involve yourſelves in all the guilt of this commerce, and to involve the unhappy objects of it in all the accumulated miſery with which it is neceſſarily attended? I ſay, my Lords, if this be a juſt repreſentation, I ſet up before you the claim of juſtice, not only for the inhabitants of the vaſt Continent of Africa, but for the preſervation of the Weſt India planters and merchants, who have preſented their complaints at your table. If they are blind to their true intereſts, if they, from too much haſte to acquire riches, expoſe themſelves to this threatening danger, I call upon your Lordſhips to prevent the dreadful conſequences, and to interpoſe your parental authority for the protection of the wealth and reſources of ſo large a portion of our fellow-ſubjects.

" My Lords, I have not yet done with the conſideration of this part of the caſe. Before you aſſent to the propoſition which has been urged with ſo much energy, and commented upon with ſo much eloquence by the counſel at the bar; before you admit the perpetuity of this importation of Slaves, for the purpoſe of clearing the waſte lands, and carrying into effect theſe great projects of colonial ambition, I intreat you to aſk yourſelves one queſtion. If, for this purpoſe, the trade is to be carried on, to what length, to what extent, and under what new devices and expedients, is it to be purſued? Let thoſe who would perſevere in it on theſe grounds, if they pleaſe, ſupply the anſwer to this inquiry, and let them explain,

what

what period of time will be neceſſary to import into the Weſt Indies, Slaves ſufficient for the culture of the extenſive waſtes in thoſe colonies. Let them ſpeak, not only to the duration, but to the number of hands which will be required. Let them tell us what is the amount of the ſacrifice to be made, what is the maſs of population to be torn from the boſom of their country, from their parents, their wives, their children, and their friends, in order to bring the eſtates to that condition of improvement they contemplate.

" In the abſence of all attempt at information on their part, I will acquaint your Lordſhips, by a calculation on a very moderate ſcale, what would be the effect, if any ſuch ſcheme were carried into execution. To cultivate the waſte lands in Jamaica alone, this traffic muſt be carried on for *two or three centuries*, and *one million of human beings* muſt be tranſported from their native ſoil, to place that iſland in the condition propoſed. For the other iſlands, ſimilar exceſſes againſt the laws and rights of our nature muſt be committed, in proportion to the extent of the territory to be rendered productive, and the greater or leſs difficulties, from the quality and ſituation of the ground, in its cultivation.

" I wiſh it were poſſible to exhibit the picture, not before the eyes of your Lordſhips, accuſtomed as you are to reſpect the obligations of humanity, but to the view of the *moſt practiſed Slave dealer*, nay even of the moſt *hardened barbarian*; to bring into his preſence millions of human beings, all of which vaſt multitude muſt endure the greateſt degree of ſuffering; each of whom muſt be dragged from the country he loves, from the friends he reveres, from the circle in which his early habits have been formed; muſt have every ſtring of his heart, which connects him with all he holds moſt dear, rudely broken, and muſt be conveyed to ſpend the remainder of his days in hopeleſs bondage: muſt be expoſed to death, or to a fate much worſe than death. And for what purpoſe is this accumulation of calamity to be endured? What is the anſwer you receive from the planters and merchants to this inquiry? In the language of the learned counſel, it is, my Lords, to gratify the ſpeculative hopes of profit.

" But, in looking at the ſubject in this point of obſervation, we have only introduced into the picture a very ſmall portion of the miſery which is, in truth, occaſioned by ſuch ſcenes of atrocity. Every one of theſe individuals, thus forced from their native homes, have ſocial connections and relations, who muſt participate in the diſtreſſes to which they are expoſed. Then, my Lords, leaving this vaſt complication of human calamity, attend for a moment to what is depicted in the evidence, where the mode in which theſe victims are procured is deſcribed. Hunted down like ferocious beaſts, ſee the terror which is ſpread through the forests of Africa, and reflect, my Lords, that this is not the picture of a day, according to the projects of theſe adventurers. Age after age is to continue this proſpect of horror and deſolation. My Lords, can there be an individual in exiſtence who bears the ſtamp of humanity, who could contemplate ſuch a picture without the moſt painful emotions? Yet, this is the boon which is aſked of you by the legiſlature of Jamaica, and this is the boon, which I am ſure, my Lords, you will not concede.

" My Lords, it is deſired of you, that you ſhould take no haſty ſteps, that you ſhould pauſe before you act in an affair of this magnitude, and wait for a future time, when what is now propoſed may be effected with leſs detriment to the perſons intereſted in theſe concerns. This, my Lords, is no new ſtory; during nearly a quarter of a century, this queſtion has been agitated within your walls, and from the commencement of the inquiry to the preſent time, you have been obliged to liſten to the ſame ſort of application for a gradual abolition of the trade, by a delay, in which the Legiſlature is deeply guilty. The period is now arrived, when they have told you the abolition would be attended with leſs ſerious conſequences. The gradual abolition they ſought has, in fact, taken place, and we are all at the ſame point; ſince thoſe who have wiſhed for the gradual abolition, and thoſe who are deſirous of its immediate termination, under the conditions of this bill will have their hopes accompliſhed.

" Beſides the topics to which I have already attended, there is only one danger, which was argued at your bar;

only

only one, perhaps, which either in public or private converſation has excited particular notice and intereſt. This view of it is in ſome degree new, becauſe the event, on which the argument is founded, has tranſpired at a recent date. You are told, my Lords, that a great revolution has happened, ſince this ſubject was before conſidered amongſt you; that St. Domingo having revolted, a great increaſe of danger is to be apprehended from its vicinity to your ſettlements; that while Jamaica is at the diſtance of twelve hundred miles from any Britiſh port, St. Domingo is only fourteen hours ſail from that iſland, and, that in caſe of an inſurrection, the Negroes of Jamaica will be aſſiſted in their rebellion by theſe ſavage and hoſtile neighbours. In this ſituation of things, it is ſaid, that whatever might be the opinion of men of judgment before, no perſon of ſound ſenſe would, for the preſent, promote any change; the nation ſhould hold its hand until the natural and political effects of this adjacent revolution ſhall be aſcertained. My Lords, what is here held forth to you as an objection, I conſider to be a ſtrong and urgent motive for the abolition of this traffic, and while I deliver my ſentiments on this part of the ſubject, I addreſs you as one in a ſtate of awful reſponſibility, whoſe duty it is to apply vigilant attention to the general intereſts of the country, and of all its remote dependencies; and I aſſure you, my Lords, if I were called upon to ſay what is the principal danger reſulting from the preſent ſituation of the iſland of St. Domingo, in the neighbourhood of our colonies, I ſhould ſay, it is preciſely that which would ariſe from the continued importations of Negroes from Africa. And if I were required to expreſs my ſentiments on the meaſures Parliament ought to adopt, to avoid the conſequences of this formidable danger, I ſhould recommend, that theſe importations ſhould for the future be prevented.

" It is, perhaps, ſcarcely worth while to notice the danger that has been talked of from announcing the opinion of Parliament on this trade. No future evil is to be dreaded from this cauſe, for the ſenſe of Parliament has already been proclaimed, that this intercourſe with Africa is contrary to the principles of juſtice and humanity. The pernicious effect, whatever it may be, is

brought

brought home, and both Houſes have ſolemnly declared, before the world, their conviction on this ſubject. But will the Slave, tranſported in fetters from his native country, and made to encounter the labours of the field and the inclemencies of the ſeaſons in diſtant regions, that he may gratify the mercenary deſigns of his employers, remain ignorant that the acts by which he ſuffers theſe hardſhips are moſt unjuſt and cruel? Is he ſo inſenſible to the calamities of his own ſituation, that he waits for the Britiſh Parliament to announce to him the wrongs he has endured? If he wait to learn your opinion, my Lords, that knowledge is already acquired, the danger is at your own door, and the fit queſtion is, not whether it will be incurred, but how it is to be avoided? I will anſwer this inquiry. It is by obſtructing the importation of more Slaves. And if, my Lords, you will calmly examine the nature of this objection, you will diſcover additional motives for the Abolition, from the novel circumſtances of St. Domingo, and the appearances elſewhere.

" I know it has been ſaid by the counſel, that no peril was to be apprehended from the native Africans, becauſe, being drawn from different countries, and ſpeaking different languages, they were incapable of coaleſcing for any purpoſe of general inſurrection. Thus circumſtanced, they could do nothing, and *divide et impera* was the happy maxim by which all danger of this kind might be eluded.

" My Lords, it is my opinion, that if you wiſh to guard againſt the danger of inſurrection, you ſhould take the advice to which I have referred, and which is given by an experienced planter, the hiſtorian of the iſland of Jamaica, (Mr. Long.) He diſtinctly ſays, that the cauſe of the frequent rebellions in that iſland is the continued importation of new Negroes; and that the effectual means of putting a ſtop to theſe diſorders, is to prevent ſuch importations. Your Lordſhips muſt be aware, from the facts ſtated in the hiſtory of theſe ſettlements, that the Negroes born in the Iſlands, having all their habits domeſticated, looking to the territory around them as their native home, having, I hope, in many caſes no feeling of new cruelties, being often treated with kindneſs if not with reſpect, are contented, and in ſome degree

happy

happy under their laborious duties; and have ſome affection for their maſters, which confirms them in their habits of obedience. While this is the caſe of the natives, the newly imported negroes, ſmarting under a ſenſe of injury, riſe in rebellion, and ſpread deſtruction around them.

" It is pretended that the humane diſpoſition exerciſed towards the Slaves of St. Domingo, the expedients adopted to improve their education, and to alleviate their burthens, were the real cauſes of the inſurrection in that iſland. My Lords, directly the reverſe is the truth; they were hurried into this ſtate of diſorder and diſorganization, by the moſt groſs and ſhameful violations of the engagements made with them.

" Among the ſtrange aſſertions reſpecting the Slaves in our Iſlands, it has been ſaid, that it was to them a great gratification to ſee one of theſe African Slave Ships enter the harbour of the iſland where they were employed, conveying number of human beings of their own complexion and country, to ſhare the melancholy fate to which they had been deſtined. I believe, if there could be any circumſtance diſtinguiſhed, which had the moſt powerful influence to keep alive in the wounded breaſts of the African exiles, an active principle of reſentment for the wrongs they had ſuffered, it would be the daily habit of witneſſing the arrival of freſh cargoes, conſiſting of the natives of their country, which continued to be thus depopulated and exhauſted by ſcenes of violence and crime. I am perſuaded, and I ſpeak hiſtorically, that no ſuch deſire as has been repreſented, of ſeeing ſhips ſucceſſively arrive from their native coaſt ever exiſted among the blacks of the iſland St. Domingo; yet this is among the numerous falſehoods which have been publiſhed of that people. It was perfidy alone which produced the rebellion, and the ſubſequent devaſtation of that once flouriſhing colony. If you wiſh to guard againſt ſuch dreadful effects in your own iſlands, let not theſe inſults to humanity be committed before the eyes of their countrymen; diſcontinue theſe importations; inſtead of enemies, make friends of the natives of the iſlands by gentleneſs and benignity; and to friends they will be converted by the Britiſh Parliament, which by paſſing this bill, will

induce

induce the Planters, from a regard to their own perſonal intereſt, to treat their dependents with reſpect and humanity.

" My Lords, this is the beſt way of introducing thoſe regulations which are moſt favourable to the intereſts of our Weſt Indian eſtabliſhments. But if you look to ſuch regulations as the means of ultimately producing the abolition, as ſome perſons would have us to do, inſtead of conſidering the abolition as productive of beneficial regulations, you will be deceived.

" In 1792, the Britiſh Parliament thought fit to reſolve that it was right to take meaſures for the termination of this ſpecies of commerce. We were, however, unſucceſsful in the attempt to aboliſh it, and opinions were entertained, that regulation might be introductory of the Abolition; and for this purpoſe, addreſſes were preſented, praying that his Majeſty would be pleaſed to give his commands, that it ſhould be recommended to the legiſlatures of the iſlands, to adopt ſuch expedients as would finally lead to that Abolition.

" I do not think it neceſſary to ſtate to you, my Lords, in detail, the manner and ſpirit with which the royal mandate, reſpecting theſe regulations, was received; but if any noble Lord wiſhes to acquire information on this ſubject, I will requeſt his attention to the correſpondence on the table, where all the circumſtances fully appear. When theſe humane inſtructions were received on the other ſide of the Atlantic, there exiſted, in the iſland of Barbadoes, no law by which the murder of a Negro was puniſhable beyond the contemptible penalty of eleven pounds. This fine was rather for the purpoſe of marking the ſcandal, than of deſignating the nature and extent of the offence; and ſuch, my Lords, is the cruel ſophiſtry of avarice, that in this very iſland it has been a ſubject of debate, *whether the murder of a Slave be any crime at all.* My Lord Seaforth relates to you, after his arrival in Barbadoes, three inſtances of cruel and atrocious murders, under circumſtances, which muſt excite the keeneſt pangs in the heart of every man, not rendered obdurate by ſuch exhibitions of barbarity. Human nature revolts at this cold blooded maſſacre of its ſpecies. I will not, my Lords,

Lords, give you the diſtreſs of the recital, but I will ſay, that the ingenuity of man can hardly conceive more cruelty than was exerciſed in theſe examples of depravity ſhewn on the one hand, and of ſuffering endured on the other. The perpetration of theſe enormities led my Lord Seaforth to enquire into the ſtate of the laws of the iſland, and he diſcovered, that the foul crime of murder, was to be anſwered by the trifling penalty of eleven pounds. By the recommendation of the Houſes of Parliament, ſanctioned by the authority of the Sovereign, through the medium of the Governors of the iſlands, Lord Seaforth brought the ſubject before the Council and Aſſembly of Barbadoes, and how was it received? It was received, my Lords, with inſult. Barbadoes not only refuſed to paſs a law that murder ſhould meet with its juſt puniſhment, but in the public reſolutions language was employed indicative of a ſpirit of the moſt unreſtrained arrogance.

" Far from being a pleaſure to me, my Lords, it is, on the contrary, extremely painful to enter into theſe particulars at this advanced period, when I might expect, that theſe ineffectual attempts at regulations were generally known; but fearful that I ſhould hear from the other ſide of ſome projects of regulation, as introductory of the Abolition, I have been urged to enter more than I intended, certainly more than I wiſhed, into ſuch details.

" What is the ſtate of ſociety, and what are the opinions of the different ranks of men in theſe communities, may perhaps be better collected from inſulated facts, than from general obſervation. In Barbadoes we learn from my Lord Seaforth, that a white militia man ran his bayonet into the body of a helpleſs female Negro, and being remonſtrated with for his conduct, and threatened with puniſhment, he exclaimed with a mixture of ſurpriſe and indignation; " What, for killing a Negro?" as a brutal carman might expreſs himſelf when threatened for his barbarity to the animals under his laſh; " What, for injuring a horſe?" I mention this ſingle fact, my Lords, to put it home to your feelings, that you may know the degradation of ſentiment which muſt prevail amongſt a people, where ſuch an anſwer is given on the commiſſion of ſo heinous a crime. It is material, my Lords, to

 conſider

conſider from what claſs of perſons the militia men are ſelected.

[At this ſtage of the proceeding, the Earl of MORTON roſe to ſpeak to order, and complained, that a perſon had been taking notes at the bar, in direct violation of the privileges of the Houſe. This interpoſition occaſioned ſome converſation between Lords ELDON and HOLLAND, and occaſioned ſo much interruption to the ſhort-hand writer, that he found it impracticable to obtain a full and accurate report of the ſequel of the debate. Indeed it was not in his power to do more than take ſhort notes.]

Lord GRENVILLE reſumed. " I was proceeding to ſtate a matter which appeared to me of great importance, in illuſtrating the ſubject immediately under your Lordſhip's conſideration, and which is rendered more ſo, by ſome remarks of the learned counſel, reſpecting the inclination of the white population of the iſlands, to render the condition of the Blacks more comfortable. Of whom then, are theſe white militia-men compoſed, of whoſe conduct towards the Negroes we have juſt ſeen a ſpecimen? They are drawn from the managers and overſeers of the iſlands; and on this order of perſons the amelioration of the ſtate of the Negroes is to depend. Whether, under ſuch circumſtances, any improvement in their condition can be expected, I leave to your Lordſhip's determination.

" We are to be told, perhaps, that the Aſſembly of Barbadoes is ſenſible of its error in not having attended to the recommendation given from ſuch grave and high authority, and, in not having, at the firſt mention of the complaint, enacted a puniſhment proportionate to the crime. And this obſervation leads me to mention one other particular on this part of the ſubject, which may, perhaps, deſerve more regard than any of the preceding. When the moſt ſalutary laws are paſſed, what are the means of obtaining the impartial execution of them, in ſuch a ſtate of ſociety as that which exiſts throughout our Weſt Indian Colonies, where the diſtinction is ſo ſtrongly marked between the two orders of population? The ſtate of the Weſt Indies is ſuch, that the teſtimony of a ſlave, is not only inadmiſſible againſt his own maſter, but againſt any individual

individual of the white inhabitants. What, my Lords, may be the conſequence of this excluſion of teſtimony? A cruel maſter, or any white inhabitant, may aſſemble ten thouſand of this unfortunate race, in his hall, or elſewhere, and may, without a ſingle witneſs to give evidence to the perpetration of his crimes, with his own hand commit the moſt inhuman barbarities, the moſt groſs and diſguſting inſults, (if indeed in their ſtate of degradation they can be ſuſceptible of inſult,) on theſe wretched objects of his malignity; he may command them to inflict on each other the moſt cruel torments, to ſacrifice limb and life to his ferocity; and he may do all this with impunity, provided there is no white witneſs preſent to teſtify to his flagitious conduct. My Lords, I ſhould be aſhamed to detain you with following, through all its pernicious effects, ſuch a condition of ſociety, where all the ſocial relations between man and man are ſurrendered at the ſhrine of avarice.

" Without commenting farther at preſent, my Lords, either on the character of the exiſting laws; or on the inſuperable difficulties attending their execution, if the code were as complete as human ingenuity could deviſe; I will ſtate, that the material object of this Bill is to render the perfection of the laws themſelves, as well as promptitude and fidelity in their execution, leſs neceſſary: it is to convert the ſtate of a ſlave into a ſtate reſembling that of the European peaſant or labourer: it is to attach thoſe who perform the duties of the field, to the ſoil they cultivate, and to the proprietors under whom they ſerve: it contains no new regulations to puniſh crime, but it involves abundant means to prevent it. There are hundreds of thouſands within the wide extent of the Britiſh dominions whom you puniſh for reſiſtance to the laws, but to whom thoſe laws extend no protection whatſoever, and who receive no encouragement for a long, faithful, and active diſcharge of the moſt beneficial duties.

" The learned Counſel, my Lords, has told us to look to the example of St. Domingo as a motive for continuing the importation of theſe perſecuted Africans. Continue this importation, and you will add freſh fuel to the flames which will conſume the iſlands. As you would defend

yourſelves againſt the intruſion of a foreign enemy, prevent this acceſſion of dangerous intruders: prevent it with the view to encourage a deſcription of people favourable to the peace of the colonies; and make it the intereſt of theſe to be obedient, by promoting the means of their comfort and enjoyment. Produce this effect, by ſhewing to their maſters, that the moſt ſucceſsful method of augmenting the fair proſpects of cultivation, is, by treating their dependents with reſpect and humanity.

"To prevent the deſtruction of the ſpecies, is among the numerous reaſons dictated by humanity for obſtructing the farther importation of Slaves; but there is another, connected with policy, which operates on the ſame ſide, and to which I have not yet drawn your Lordſhips' attention. For the preſervation of theſe iſlands, you are obliged to contend, not only with foreign enemies, but with internal foes, who are always on the ſpot, to take advantage of the diſorganization of the moment, and who are, by far, the moſt dangerous. The force ſent to protect theſe iſlands is ſent for the double purpoſe of defending them from exterior aſſailants, and maintaining tranquility within their borders. When theſe importations have ceaſed, the force for the latter purpoſe will be unneceſſary: order and regularity will prevail, in a ſtate of ſociety, where the happineſs of its members is conſulted, and where their paſſions are not inflamed by freſh inſults. The ſubject to which I am now adverting is not merely dictated by the ordinary principles of reaſon and humanity; it is ſuggeſted by the unſuſpicious, unſuſpected teſtimony of a perſon, who reflected upon it, long before it was agitated in a Britiſh Parliament. If your Lordſhips will refer to the work of Mr. Long, who was intimately acquainted with theſe matters, you will find, that he enumerates various rebellions which had taken place, and then he proceeds to examine the cauſe to which they are to be attributed. "Can any one be ſurpriſed, (ſays he,) at this ſpirit of inſurrection, who has conſidered the unlimited importation of freſh negroes?"

"Thus, my Lords, I have not only endeavoured to explain the general principles applicable to this enquiry; not only adduced the facts referable to thoſe principles; but

but have detailed to you the proofs by which thoſe facts have been ſupported. On theſe grounds, it will not be difficult, I preſume, to obtain your Lordſhip's aſſent to the following propoſitions.

1ſt. The intereſt of the Planter is not injured by the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

2dly. The cultivation of freſh lands furniſhes no ſufficient motive for the continuance of the trade.

3dly The danger of inſurrection from the vicinity of St. Domingo, inſtead of being an argument againſt the Bill, ſupplies powerful reaſons for its adoption.

" On one part of the ſubject, the learned Gentlemen at your bar were plain and direct in their obſervations. They ſaid, that their clients conſidered themſelves fully abſolved from any guilt which might be ſuppoſed to attach to this trade: they were not to be conſidered as chargeable with any of the nefarious practices to which it gives birth: the guilt was ours, my Lords: the merchants and planters did not create or carry on this trade: it was originally created, and progreſſively maintained by the authority of the Britiſh Parliament. Will you, my Lords, permit this guilt to reſt upon your heads? If by us it was ſanctioned, ſhall not that ſanction be withdrawn? If by us it was raiſed, ſhall we not interpoſe our authority to depreſs, and to deſtroy it? Are we bound by any anterior obligations, to plunge deeper and deeper into this ſea of guilt? Let us not now inquire in what words, or by what former arguments we have juſtified the crime: let us not examine whether Somers, Clarendon, and Locke, upheld it by their venerable names. I admit that theſe are grave authorities, I reſpect their characters, I revere their memories, and I admire their virtues; yet human nature is fallible, and this part of their conduct I muſt diſapprove: it is an offence which no law can ſanction, it is a crime which no name can cover.

" Much has been ſaid, my Lords, in the way of apology for this trade, by repreſentations, extremely inaccurate, of the condition of the Africans in their own country, and of the ſlavery and wretchedneſs to which they are expoſed. We are not wholly ignorant of the ſtate of the natives of thoſe regions, and in this inquiry, we are greatly aſſiſted

by

by an intelligent and enterprifing traveller. Mr. Park ſeems to think, that the proportion of Slaves in Africa, compared with the free men, is as three to one. Slaves are either ſuch as are born of enſlaved mothers, or ſuch as become ſo from the conſequences of war, of famine, of inſolvency, and from the commiſſion of crimes. In Africa, however, they are in a very different ſituation from that in which they are placed in the Weſt Indies. The character of the African, in general, is that of mildneſs and benignity, and whatever may be the nominal degradation of the Slaves, they partake of many of the comforts and enjoyments of their ſuperiors. Thoſe who are born in a maſter's houſe, are domeſticated, and are protected by law: the Planter, the Overſeer, and the Slave, join in the ſame common labour, and no oſtenſible diſtinctions, that are at all material, inſult their feelings. Humble as their condition may be eſteemed in ſociety, the domeſtic relations are in a great degree preſerved, and no inconſiderable portion of happineſs is enjoyed. Whatever may be the notions, entertained by Europeans, of the miſery which exiſts on the ſhores of the Gambia, it is the deſire of the Negro, as it is the univerſal wiſh of mankind, to ſpend his days where he paſſed his infancy. "To him," (we are told by the traveller I have named), "no water is ſo ſweet as what is drawn from his own well; and no tree has ſo cool and pleaſant a ſhade as the Tabba tree of his native village. When war compels him to abandon the delightful ſpot in which he firſt drew his breath, and ſeek for ſafety in ſome other kingdom, his time is ſpent in talking about the country of his anceſtors, and no ſooner is peace reſtored, than he turns his back upon the land of ſtrangers, rebuilds with haſte his fallen walls, and exults to ſee the ſmoke aſcend from his native village."

"Such is the ſtate, and ſuch the diſpoſition of the natives of Africa. Let us now, my Lords, attend, for a few moments, to the changes likely to be produced by the viſitors from Europe for the purpoſes of this commerce: let us inquire how far the peace of the natives is likely to be deſtroyed, how far their comforts are likely to be abridged, and in what degree their patriotic attachments

ments are likely to be wounded. How are Slaves procured to ſatisfy the wants of theſe intruders?

" We are told, that the greater part of the Slaves for ſale are brought down from the interior of the country in large caravans, from places, even the names of which are unknown to Europeans: that a few only are collected in the petty wars upon the coaſt, but that immenſe numbers are collected in the more remote diſtricts, by the wars which are encouraged to ſupply the materials of this hateful trade. The Slatees, or native Slave merchants, attend in the rear of the armies, and obtain from the conquerors, or rather public robbers, the unhappy victims of their violence.

" Let us, my Lords, pauſe for an inſtant, to reflect on theſe horrid ſcenes. Slaves are eſteemed more valuable by the Slatees in proportion to the diſtance of the countries from the coaſt to which they are deſtined: the more remote ſpeak a different language, and are conſidered to be more gentle and tractable, while their corporeal ſtrength is deemed equal to that of the more weſtern inhabitants. Thus, the internal diſtricts of this vaſt Continent are involved in all the terrors of war and carnage; and their natural conſequences of famine, peſtilence, and deſolation, are ſpread far and wide. Whether more of the natives periſh by the arrow and the ſpear than become captives for the deſigns of this commerce, we know not; but this we know, that civilization is obſtructed, that public peace is deſtroyed, that the tender ties of domeſtic intercourſe are cut aſunder, and that the generous feelings of humanity are outraged.

" When all this is done, when the earth is covered either with the bodies of the dead, or with thoſe of the vanquiſhed, deſtined to perpetual ſlavery, what is next to be performed? The captives are ſent, as I have ſtated, in large caravans, expoſed to all the dangers and miſeries of a journey over extenſive deſerts, until they arrive at the places where the regular markets are held. It often happens, that no purchaſer appears, and in that caſe, theſe melancholy wretches are either employed in conſtant work chained to each other, or immured in fetters within the walls of a cloſe dungeon, leſt the love of liberty ſhould

throb

throb in the breaſt of any one of them, and induce him to attempt his eſcape.

" Such, my Lords, is the brief view of the hiſtory and progreſs of theſe tranſactions, and of the dreadful effects reſulting from this trade. I ſhould not think myſelf juſtifiable if I were to detain you with any farther particulars applicable to this part of the ſubject.

" My Lords, we have not perhaps ſufficiently conſidered the prodigious extent of the evil with which this trade is accompanied. We look to the map of Africa, and contemplate it as a wild inhoſpitable deſert, forgetting that it is compoſed of diſtinct governments, and that many parts of it, at leaſt, are crouded with a numerous population. My Lords, not only one nation, but a whole continent is kept in a ſtate of barbarity by the continuance of the Slave trade. Wars are excited in the interior to ſupply the materials for it; and not only public violence in the open field is committed between hoſtile tribes, but the purpoſes of interior government are defeated, the ſacred courts of juſtice are prophaned, and pretended convictions, contrary to law and equity, conſign the melancholy victims of our avarice to exile and ſervitude.

" So greatly is this ferocious ſtate promoted by the Slave trade, that in proportion to the remoteneſs from the coaſt, which is the great theatre of public miſery, civilization proceeds; and ſo diſtinctly marked is its progreſs, that the diſtance from the coaſt may be almoſt aſcertained by the degree of civilization. Is it poſſible that any thing can more ſtrongly denote the wretched effects of this trade on the miſerable inhabitants of that immenſe country ?

" My Lords, if we look to the hiſtory of Parliament within the laſt twenty years, we ſhall find recorded the manner in which we have hitherto met this queſtion; and we ſhall diſcover, that if this bill be not paſſed, not to the Houſe of Commons, but to us, will be to be attributed a perſeverance in the Slave trade. From a regard to our own honour we ought to put a final cloſe to it : the eyes of Europe and America are directed towards us, watching our conduct with reſpect to this meaſure ; and it is of the higheſt conſequence to ourſelves, that we ſhould not diſappoint their hopes.

" But

" But it is ſaid, that we are to wait until other nations, having the ſame opinion with ourſelves of the immorality of this commerce, concur in the Abolition of it. This indeed would be to poſtpone it to a very diſtant period; and the annals of mankind furniſh no analogies by which we may guide ourſelves in producing ſuch a concurrence. The coalition of nations has uſually been to repel or depreſs ſome great power; has commonly been directed to war and carnage; and has very rarely had for its object, the cauſe of peace, juſtice, and humanity. Let thoſe who are ſo anxious for a general union of civilized empires, for the ſuppreſſion of this commerce, point out to me a ſingle inſtance in hiſtory, where ſuch a union has been effected with a view to promote the happineſs, or to prevent the miſery of any diſtant ſtates, with which no political connection has exiſted; and when they have diſcovered ſuch an example, and ſhewn me the beneficial effects with which it has been attended, I ſhall have leſs objection to any delay which may be neceſſary to facilitate this concurrence. But, my Lords, I am confident that the hiſtoric page ſupplies us with no ſuch precedent, and to wait for this reciprocity, would be to delay the Abolition until mankind had arrived at a much higher ſtate of improvement, than we can flatter ourſelves with witneſſing in our own times.

" Then, it is ſaid, that to reſign this trade, is ineffectual for any valuable purpoſe, as America is only waiting to take advantage of your folly; that America will ſend her vaſt commercial marine to the ſhores of Africa, and conduct the ſame trade to an extent of enormity which is impracticable in England, under the humane and ſalutary regulations by which it is reſtrained. Is it unknown to your Lordſhips, that this is one of thoſe deluſions which the advocates for this trade are ſo much accuſtomed to reſort to, in order to prevent a correct view from being taken of this important ſubject? Are you ignorant, my Lords, that a law is now in unreſiſted progreſs in the United States, by which it is to be enacted, that thoſe who engage in this murderous trade, ſhould pay with their lives the penalty of the crime?

" If it be admitted, that this trade may be already conſidered as extinct in America, from the influence of thoſe maxims of enlightened policy which pervade the inſtitutions of that republic; we are next told, that no ſuch principles are received among the old governments of Europe; that many of theſe, poſſeſſing extenſive reſources of navigation, will take up with avidity what you ſurrender, and, while your maritime ſtrength is weakened by the ſacrifice, theirs will be greatly increaſed by the acquiſition.

" A little attention to the preſent ſituation of Europe, will convince us, that, with the exception of Portugal, there is no European ſtate capable of engaging in this trade. The truth is, that Portugal itſelf can contribute very little to the maintenance of that portion of it which we abandon. It is not merely to the induſtry and ingenuity of the Britiſh people that their widely-extended commerce is to be aſcribed; it is alſo to be attributed to the opulence of our merchants, to the large capitals they are capable of inveſting in remote and difficult enterprizes; and of the various branches of commercial ſpeculation, there are few which require more capital than that to which I have been now adverting. In the preſent ſtate of derangement and diſorganization of the Continent of Europe, when almoſt every government is ſhaken to its centre; when property, through immenſe diſtricts, is almoſt annihilated, where is the capital to be found by which ſuch large projects of individual gain are to be ſupported? Where, above all, is to be found that confidence, either public or private, without which ſuch a ſpecies of extended commerce can never ſubſiſt?

" From theſe conſiderations, my Lords, I would exhort you to baniſh all alarming apprehenſions, on account of any ſucceſſes of rival ſtates in the proſecution of this trade. But were it otherwiſe; ſuppoſing all theſe imaginary ſtories, which the friends of this pernicious ſyſtem have invented, were founded in accurate views of the reſources of European nations, ought we, on that account, to be the inſtruments of this commerce? Ought we, my Lords, to commit the foul crime of murder, becauſe others can be found atrocious enough to be the perpetrators of it,

if

if we ſhould arreſt our hands when raiſed for the deſtruction of our ſpecies ?

" One of the moſt curious arguments urged in objection to this bill, is, that it is not ſufficiently extenſive, ſo as to prevent all Slavery within the wide range of the Britiſh dominions. We are told, that if it aboliſh the introduction of new Slaves, ſtill there is a claſs of men in our iſlands, who are doomed to perpetual ſervitude, who are Britiſh ſubjects, and who are entitled to the protection of Britiſh laws. Let us look for a moment to the tendency of this reaſoning. It is, that becauſe one law does not compriſe all poſſible good, the good which it does propoſe ought not to be purſued ; and becauſe we cannot at once alleviate all the diſtreſſing circumſtances attendant on Slavery, we are to exert no endeavours to diminiſh them. The error in this caſe ariſes from blending two things, which are in themſelves perfectly diſtinct. The queſtion before your Lordſhips is not whether the Slaves now exiſting in the Weſt Indies ſhould be emancipated ; but whether the freſh ſupplies from Africa ſhould be obſtructed, and all the evils incident to that trade prevented. Whatever doubts may be entertained reſpecting the former queſtion, on the ſcore of juſtice, reſpecting the latter there is no uncertainty, when the facts of the caſe are detailed. No comment is neceſſary ; every mind muſt inſtantly acknowledge, that ſuch a practice is inconſiſtent with the relative duties of man and man. It is alſo important to remember, that any ſudden changes may prove unfavourable to happineſs. It is often neceſſary, that we ſhould be prepared gradually for any great change in our condition, even where the mind is improved by a high degree of civilization. Liberty, raſhly and injudiciouſly given to the Slaves in the Weſt Indies, might be the means of their inſtant and utter deſtruction. This obſervation may be confirmed hiſtorically, by adverting to the ſtate of St. Domingo. It is, however, of great conſequence, that we ſhould look attentively to that period, when the diſgrace of Slavery, in any form, ſhall no longer be ſuffered within the territories of this free country. While we are advocates for the liberties of Europe, while we raiſe the ſtandard of freedom againſt the common

enemy of order, virtue and humanity, it behoves us peculiarly to preſerve that freedom unpolluted within the pale of the Britiſh empire. Feeling, my Lords, ſtrongly, all the duties which reſult from ſuch a ſituation, I recommend this meaſure to your notice, as the moſt ſafe and effectual means of the ultimate emancipation of the Slaves in the Weſt Indies. By this expedient, you will abundantly ameliorate their condition, ſo that they may be fitted for the enjoyment of that liberty, which in every region of the earth is the common right of human nature.

" During twenty years, I have been ſolicitous that the great deſign contemplated in the preſent bill ſhould be accompliſhed, and I hope and believe, that at laſt our exertions in ſo good a cauſe will be attended with ſucceſs. If it ſhould be ſo, I ſhall look upon the reſult of theſe endeavours, in every future period of my exiſtence, with pride and ſatisfaction. If I ſhould be diſappointed, I ſhall, at leaſt, have the conſolation of having, however ineffectually, employed the beſt means in my power to attain an object calculated to promote the beſt intereſts of my country, and in which its honour and happineſs are equally concerned.

" But while I ſpeak of my own humble inſtrumentality in promoting this deſirable event, I cannot avoid adverting with reſpect and admiration to the unwearied labours of an honourable member of another Houſe, a conſiderable portion of whoſe life has been devoted to the intereſt of humanity, and to the glory of England in the ſame purſuit. Year after year has he perſevered, without being impeded by difficulties, without being diſcouraged by reſiſtance. His vigilance and ability were equal to meet the one, and his fortitude and ſpirit were competent to encounter the other. Poſſeſſing talents ſuited to any ſituation, he has choſen his place among the injured ſons of Africa, and with the energies of his virtue, and the powers of his eloquence, he has at laſt convinced his countrymen of the ſacred rights they have prophaned in that remote continent, too long the theatre of rapine, deſolation, and murder.

" I am afraid I have very imperfectly diſcharged the duty

duty I had undertaken; it has, however been fulfilled in the beſt manner I am able, and I hope your Lordſhips, by your vote of this night for the ſecond reading of this bill, will give your farther ſanction to a meaſure which is recommended to your ſupport by ſo many cogent motives."

[The report of the ſequel of this day's debate is ſo imperfect, in conſequence of the interruption given to the ſhort-hand writers, that it will not be poſſible to do much more than mention the names of the different ſpeakers, in the order in which they followed each other.]

The Duke of CLARENCE followed Lord Grenville, and argued againſt the Abolition of the Slave Trade, on the ground of the injury which muſt reſult from the meaſure to the commerce and naval power of this country. The Slave trade would not be aboliſhed. It would only paſs into other hands, who would carry it on with a greater waſte of human life than was incurred by us. As for the Slaves in the Weſt Indies, he affirmed that they were the happieſt ſet of people in the world, and that it was humanity to place them in that ſituation.

The Duke of GLOUCESTER, in a ſpeech worthy of a deſcendant of the Houſe of Brunſwick, combated the arguments of his Royal relation, and affirmed the trade in queſtion to be a cruel and criminal traffic in the blood of our fellow creatures, and therefore a foul ſtain on the national character, and an offence to the Almighty. On every ground to which an appeal had been made: on the ground of policy, on the ground of humanity, on the ground of juſtice; but above all, on the ground of religion, he would vote for its immediate extinction.

The Earl of WESTMORLAND entered into a long defence of the Slave Trade, and attempted to blunt the force of ſome of Lord Grenville's arguments. He maintained that the Weſt Indian iſlands could not maintain their population if this trade were aboliſhed, and that the effect of a diminiſhed population would be a diminiſhed cultivation,

a falling off in our trade and revenue, and in our naval reſources, and conſequently the ruin of the empire.

The Earl of SELKIRK refuted the reaſoning which had been employed on the ſubject of population, and ſhewed from the whole courſe of paſt experience, as well as from every approved axiom in political œconomy, that where a people are not ſubjected to extraordinary ſeverities and privations, they muſt increaſe.

Lord Viſcount SIDMOUTH ſtated at large the reaſons which induced him to prefer gradual to immediate abolition. He dwelt principally on our ignorance of Weſt Indian ſtatiſtics, as a reaſon at leaſt for delay, until we ſhould have ſatisfied ourſelves that the population of the iſlands would be kept up without freſh importations. He uſed at the ſame time, with reſpect to the trade itſelf, all thoſe ſtrong epithets of reprobation which he had been accuſtomed to employ in deſcribing it.

The Earl of ROSSLYN, in a very luminous ſpeech, endeavoured to ſatisfy the noble Viscount who had preceded him, that his fears, with reſpect to the effects of this meaſure on Weſt Indian population, were vain. He proved by the documents on the table, that all the Weſt India iſlands from which returns had been procured, had already arrived at that point at which the noble Viſcount had ſaid it would be ſafe to aboliſh the Slave Trade. He therefore claimed the ſupport of the noble Viſcount on his own principles.—Lord Roſslyn's ſpeech was throughout replete with ſolid argument and convincing ſtatements.

Earl ST. VINCENT expreſſed his decided diſapprobation of the propoſed meaſure, ſaid he had been in the Weſt Indies himſelf, and was fully perſuaded from perſonal obſervation, that the planters in our iſlands were the moſt humane ſet of men, and the Negroes the happieſt ſet of beings, in the univerſe.

Lord HOOD remarked, that he alſo had been in the Weſt Indies; not like the noble Earl, living on board his ſhip,

ſhip, and only paying an occaſional viſit to the plantations, but reſiding for long periods of time, on one occaſion, for two years, on ſhore. He had ſeen ſuch a maſs of miſery in thoſe iſlands, that he could not ſatisfy his conſcience not to come and give all the ſupport of which he was capable to this grand meaſure of juſtice and benevolence. He then related ſeveral facts which had paſſed under his own obſervation, as proving the wretched, helpleſs, and degraded ſtate of the Negro Slaves. The Houſe was viſibly affected by the noble Lord's relation.

Lord KING expreſſed, in a few words, his abhorrence of the Slave Trade.

Lord ELDON oppoſed the preſent meaſure, on the ground chiefly of the injuſtice which would be done by it to the Planters, particularly if full compenſation were not given them for their loſſes.

The Biſhop of DURHAM gave the bill his cordial ſupport; and ſhewed at large the inconſiſtency of the trade which it was intended to aboliſh with every principle of the Chriſtian religion.

Earl MOIRA made a maſterly and dignified appeal to the juſtice and feeling of the Houſe. He ſeverely animadverted on thoſe who had endeavoured to defend the trade, by placing it on the footing of a providential appointment, with which it was wrong to interfere; (Lord Weſtmoreland had uſed ſome ſuch argument) and ſhewed, by a reference both to the works and word of God, how futile ſuch pretences were.

Lord HAWKESBURY went over a great part of the ground which he had taken on former occaſions, in vindicating the continuance of this trade, though admitted to be a great evil.

Lord HOLLAND replied to the laſt ſpeaker, and to others who had ſpoken in favour of the Slave Trade in the courſe of the debate. His ſpeech throughout was highly

eloquent

eloquent and impreſſive. But when towards the cloſe of it he ventured to allude to Mr. Fox, he was quite overcome, and there was ſcarcely an individual in the houſe who did not ſeem to ſympathize with him. In the courſe of his ſpeech the noble Lord paid an elegant compliment to the author of this great meaſure, who had immortalized his name by his unwearied efforts in the cauſe of juſtice and humanity, and whoſe memory would be bleſſed by millions yet unborn.

The queſtion was now loudly called for. When the Houſe divided, (which was about four o'clock in the morning) the numbers were as follows:

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Proxies - - -	28	
		100
Not Contents - -	28	
Proxies - - -	8	
		36

FEB. 6.

The Houſe went into a Committee on the bill, and filled up the blanks.

FEB. 9.

The Report of the Committee was received.

FEB. 10.

The bill was read a third time, and ſent to the Commons.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

TUESDAY, FEB. 10, 1807.

THE Bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was brought up from the Lords, read a firſt time, and ordered to be read a ſecond time on the 20th.

FRIDAY, FEB. 20.

On the order of the day for the ſecond reading of the Bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade being read, it was moved, that Counſel ſhould be heard on behalf of the Petitioners againſt the bill; and the motion being agreed to, counſel were accordingly called in and heard, viz. *Mr. Dallas*, in behalf of the Weſt Indian Merchants and Planters; *Mr. Alexander*, in behalf of the Merchants engaged in the African Slave Trade; *Mr. Clarke*, in behalf of the Corporation of Liverpool; and *Mr. Scarlett*, in behalf of the Merchants and Planters concerned in the iſland of Trinidad.

The hearing of counſel having been protracted to a late hour, it was agreed to read the bill a ſecond time, and to reſerve the debate on the principle of the meaſure to the 23d, when the motion ſhould be made for going into a Committee.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23.

Previous to the order of the day being moved, for going into a Committee on the Bill for aboliſhing the Slave Trade,

Mr. MANNING roſe, and explained, at ſome length, his views on the ſubject of compenſation to the Planters for the loſſes which they would incur by the propoſed meaſure. Compenſation, he ſaid, would not, in his opinion, be required to any great extent; but ſtill, he conceived it was

indiſpenſable to the ends of juſtice, that a proſpect of fair compenſation ſhould be held out to the Planters. He concluded with aſking Miniſters, if they were ready to accede to a propoſal for compenſation?

Lord Howick replied, that he was not prepared to ſignify the concurrence of his Majeſty, on the ſubject of the compenſations which had been ſo frequently mentioned when the abolition of the Slave Trade had been under the conſideration of the Houſe; nor would he, at this moment, enter upon the conſideration of the ſubject, becauſe he did not think the preſent ſtage of the buſineſs the fit one for examining the merits of this queſtion. He did not think it right that Parliament ſhould, in this ſtate of its progreſs in the buſineſs, conſider, with a view to compenſation, the eventual loſſes conſequent on the ſteps it might or might not take. He then moved the order of the day, for the Houſe to go into a committee on the bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

The queſtion being put, that this bill be committed immediately,

Lord Howick roſe. "In the courſe of my parliamentary experience, I have ſeldom found myſelf in a ſtate of greater embarraſsment, than at this moment. When I take under my review the great extent and variety of the details which are preſſing on my mind, I find it extremely difficult to diſtinguiſh between thoſe which have been often repeated, and others, to which the attention of the Houſe has been leſs frequently invited; and I ſhould lament my own indiſcretion, if I were very long to treſpaſs upon the time of the Houſe, on a ſubject in which no honourable member feels, perhaps, more ſtrongly than I do, but which is more familiar to many of thoſe whom I have the honour to addreſs, than it is to myſelf.

"Since I profeſs that this is a queſtion in the reſult of which I feel more intereſted than any in which I have taken a part from the commencement of my duties in this place, I am anxious to ſtate the motives and the grounds of the proceedings, eſpecially in this new Parliament, in which ſome of the members cannot be very converſant in the inquiry;

inquiry; and theſe principles will be ſupplied from a part of the facts ſelected from the vaſt body of evidence, upon which, I conceive, the concluſion we would arrive at ought to depend. To moſt of the honourable members, the whole queſtion is known with all its merits, and in all its details, and they muſt be perfectly aware, that whatever branch I advert to, their patience muſt be expoſed to ſome trial; yet, I muſt not on this account, neglect to do juſtice to the cauſe in which I am ſolicitous to acquit myſelf, both from the impulſe of private feeling, and the obligation of public duty.

"From the repeated diſcuſſions to which I have alluded, ſome of the material facts and principles have been clearly demonſtrated, ſo that what it was heretofore neceſſary to argue, is in many reſpects, at this time, no longer a proper ſubject of doubt or diſputation. I am, not, Sir, aware, that it is the diſpoſition of many to diſpute the leading propoſition on which this bill is founded. I believe it is now, almoſt univerſally acknowledged, and even by thoſe who are merchants or planters, that the principle of the trade, as far as it concerns Africa, is moſt unjuſt. Aſſuming then this conceſſion, I am relieved from that part of the argument which was employed to ſhew, that this trade does entail upon the Continent of Africa the moſt frightful of human calamities; where a condition of remote exile and ſervitude is procured by war, by falſe accuſations, by kidnapping, robbery, and pillage; all which, in whatever light we may conſider it, to the inhabitants of Africa is a perpetual incentive to violence and murder, an impaſſable bar to the progreſs of civilization, and the means of happineſs throughout thoſe vaſt and various regions. This concluſion is no longer diſputed.

"Nor is this the only part of the queſtion, in which I am releaſed from farther elucidation by the ample diſcuſſion which it has already undergone. There is another portion of it, in which I have not heard any attempt at juſtification; I mean, as to the ſufferings incident to the conveyance of the Slaves to the Weſt Indies. Confident as the learned council have been in many particulars, they have ventured to tell us nothing of the luxuries of the middle paſſage. The endeavour has not now been

made to perſuade us, that theſe poor creatures, rudely torn from the warm boſom of their country, were indulging in the ſong and the dance, as uſed formerly to be repreſented. After an examination of theſe matters during the long period of twenty years, ſuch vague aſſertions have been contradicted; ſuch illuſive notions been exploded; and at this advanced period I may be admitted to cheriſh the expectation, that there is not a man in the Houſe who is prepared to ſtate that the trade to Africa is juſt, or that the treatment of the Slaves in the middle paſſage is not injurious and cruel.

" Let me not, however, gratify my wiſhes by falſe views of the public ſentiment in this houſe. There have, I believe, been one or two individuals who, notwithſtanding the protracted inquiries into the merits of this queſtion, yet remain inſenſible under the powerful reaſoning which has been directed to enlighten their underſtandings; and it has been ſtated by one honourable member, not ſurely without ſome appearance of extravagance, that the Slave Trade is of ſo excellent a nature, that if it did not exiſt, he would himſelf propoſe its eſtabliſhment. I leave ſuch a declaration to the feelings of the houſe and of the country, being ſatisfied, that it requires no oppoſition in the ſerious form of argument.

" I believe that elſewhere it has been aſſerted, that this trade is ſanctioned by divine authority, and that the holy ſcriptures ſupply the vindication of it. To this I ſhall anſwer in a ſingle ſentence by obſerving, that it is contrary to the fundamental doctrine of the Chriſtian religion; to that benevolent command which comprehends, in a few words, all the great duties of human nature, enjoining us to do unto others as we would that they ſhould do unto us.

" After theſe reflections, Sir, I may diſmiſs the argument applicable to that diviſion of the ſubject, although it conſtitutes, indeed, the very eſſence of the queſtion; and I ſhall, therefore, aſſume, that with reſpect to Africa this is a trade which cannot be reconciled with the acknowledged principles of juſtice and humanity.

" The queſtion then is reduced, almoſt excluſively, to the narrow point of national policy; I ſay almoſt, becauſe

juſtice,

juſtice, as a relative virtue, involves itſelf in the queſtion of policy; for we are not to contemplate juſtice merely as it is to be diſtributed to the African, but as it is connected with our own merchants and with our colonial eſtabliſhments. The queſtion being capable of theſe reſtrictions, I ſhall avail myſelf of the convenience of taking a more contracted view of the ſubject than has been uſual on ſome former occaſions; but before I do ſo, I muſt enter my proteſt againſt ſome principles of relative juſtice which have been very confidently ſtated.

"I admit that the queſtion ſhould be examined in all its ſeveral views, and in all its different hearings: and when I am called upon to do juſtice to our traders here, and to our coloniſts abroad, I muſt admit that they have, with all the reſt of the world, and in common with all our fellow ſubjects, a decided claim of juſtice at our hands. But what they have denominated juſtice is not conſiſtent with the legitimate character of that virtue: for they call upon us to violate the rights of others, and to tranſgreſs our own moral duties. What they diſtinguiſh as juſtice, involves the greateſt injury to others. It is not, in fact, juſtice which they demand—but favour—and favour to themſelves at the expence of the moſt grievous injuſtice to others.

"If it can be ſhewn, as I think has already been rendered moſt palpable, that this trade has been productive of the greateſt evils to a whole continent; that it occaſions robbery, violence, and murder; I ſay that no pretences of commercial profit or advantage could induce, or ought to induce, the legiſlature of Great Britain to continue ſuch a traffic. I cannot believe that it is poſſible ſuch a contradiction ſhould exiſt between the means and the end preſcribed by beneficent Providence, that individuals ſhould be vindicated in purſuing an ultimate good by the commiſſion of enormous crimes.

"If I were prepared to admit that in the firſt inſtance the abolition of this trade, which I truſt at length is about to be accompliſhed, would be attended with ſome temporary inconvenience to the commerce of the realm, yet, feeling, as I do, that the trade is contrary to all the principles of juſtice and humanity, I ſhould contend for its annihilation as for

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one of the moſt ſacred of duties which could be impoſed upon the parliament of this country.

" As, however, the queſtion of policy has been ſtarted, I wiſh at preſent particularly to attend to it in that light, though certainly not with the view to determine by the degrees of policy, whether we ſhould proceed to abolition. But it may tranquilize the ſpirits, and conciliate the minds of ſome perſons, if I ſhould be ſucceſsful in proving, that it is not in a high degree profitable; that it is not neceſſary to the commercial proſperity to the revenues, or the maritime power of the country; that, on the contrary, all theſe may be increaſed by the ſolemn act of juſtice I have propoſed. Then, I truſt, every motive operating againſt the ſuppreſſion of it will be removed.

" The parties who have oppoſed this bill appear before the houſe, either in the character of merchants, ſhip-owners, or planters. I ſhall conſider each of theſe diſtinctions in ſome detail, with a deſign to ſhew, that none of theſe intereſted parties can have a fit ground of complaint.

" Firſt, with regard to thoſe who are concerned in the trade from this country, and who have been repreſented at the bar by the learned counſel; I am not at all diſcouraged by the ſtatements that have been ſo ably made to you through that channel; and in order to eſtabliſh correct notions of them, I ſhall enquire into the real value of this trade, and the extent in which it is likely to be affected by your determination.

" It was declared by one of the Gentlemen to whom I have juſt referred, who appeared in behalf of the merchants of Liverpool, that the prodigious increaſe and great opulence of that town, were almoſt entirely to be attributed to the exiſtence of the Slave Trade. I ſhould be exceedingly ſorry if it could be correctly ſtated, that the commerce of that valuable port depended upon the African Trade; meaning, at this moment, that part of the trade to Africa which conſiſts in the tranſport of Slaves.

" It will be my buſineſs, by a reference to the accounts before the houſe, to explain how incorrectly the calculations are made which can lead to any ſuch concluſion. By the accounts it appears, that this branch of commerce

amounted

amounted only to one fifty-third part of our whole trade. Yet this is not a fair repreſention for my argument, becauſe the tonnage in the export trade from Ireland, and in the coaſting trade, is not included. Another ſource of miſtake, is, that not only the ſhips engaged in the Slave Trade, but thoſe in the direct African Trade, and which have no connection with the Slave Trade are comprehended. Thus, every advantage is given to thoſe who, on the principle of the importance of this trade, oppoſe the abolition.

"But to follow the queſtion through the particular accounts. In the year 1803, about thirty thouſand tons of ſhipping cleared out for the coaſt of Africa, which employed about 3900 ſeamen. Of theſe, taking the round numbers, about ſeven thouſand ſix hundred tons returned with produce, without engaging in the farther voyage to the Weſt Indies, for the purpoſe of the Slave Trade; and therefore, only about 22,400 tons and 3300 ſeamen, were actually employed in the conveyance of Slaves.

"The total tonnage employed in the export trade of this iſland in the ſame year was 1,435,850, and the number of ſeamen employed in the navigation of the ſhipping compoſing this tonnage, was 92,940. Thus taking the round numbers, and not attending to the minute proportions, it appears that only one ſixty-fourth part of the whole Britiſh tonnage, and ſomething leſs than one twenty-eighth part of the native ſeamen employed in the export trade of this iſland alone were engaged in the Slave Trade.

"About 54,000 tons and 28,700 ſeamen belonging to foreign countries, were employed in our export trade this year. But only Britiſh tonnage and ſeamen are reckoned above.—The Iriſh export trade is likewiſe wholly deducted.

"In the year 1804, ſomething more than thirty-eight thouſand tons of ſhipping cleared out for the coaſt of Africa, with a proportionable number of ſeamen, and by comparing it in the ſame way with the total tonnage, and with the total of the number of ſeamen, deducting thoſe ſhips and men deſtined to the ſame coaſt, and not engaged in the Slave Trade, it appeared, that one forty-eighth of the tonnage, and one twentieth of the ſeamen were occupied in this commerce. Following the ſame mode of

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eſtimate for the year 1805, the Britiſh tonnage employed in the export trade from Great Britain (not including the export trade from Ireland) was 1,495, 968, and the number of ſeamen conducting this quantity of ſhipping was 94,388. Comparing this with the tonnage cleared out for Africa, and making the allowance, as before, for that part of it in the direct trade not connected with the Slave Trade, the relative ſtate was one fifty-ſecond of the tonnage, and one twenty-third of the total number of ſeamen, employed in the Britiſh export trade, excluding, as I ſaid before, the Iriſh trade, and alſo the coaſting trade.

"The reſult, then, upon the average of three years, is that only one fifty-fourth of the total Britiſh tonnage, and one twenty-third of the total of the ſeamen, employed in the export trade of Britain, alone are engaged in the African Slave Trade.

"I wiſh Gentlemen attending to theſe calculations would conſider, whether if this amount of ſhipping and ſeamen were to be utterly annihilated by the bill, it could be conceived ſuch a ſerious loſs as this country would be unable to bear; ſuch a loſs as to furniſh an adequate reaſon for reſiſting the meaſure. But Gentlemen cannot be ignorant of the abundant facilities which the ingenuity of the commercial ſpirit could put in requiſion to fulfil its purpoſes. We ſee, every day, in what a variety of ways the ſurplus capital always finds a vent in ſome new engagements, ſo that it could not reaſonably be imagined, that one fifty-fourth of the commercial marine, and one twenty-third of the hands ſupported by it, would not find employment in ſome way beneficial to thoſe concerned at preſent in the Slave Trade.

"But I will take another view of the ſubject. The whole annual value of the export trade to Africa, on an average of ten years ending in 1800, was 930, 194, from which is to be deducted the produce returned by the ſhipping engaged on the coaſt, and not having the ſame remote deſtination, but returning to this country with goods. This amounts on the ſame average to £83,725, and leaves for the capital engaged in the Slave Trade £846,409. Now comparing this with the total of the exports at the ſame period, I do not think that this does preſent to the Houſe ſo formidable

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an appearance as to prevent the final decision of this great question of national justice. The proportion, the first amount, so reduced by the second, bears to the average capital of the export trade, does not exceed *one thirty-fourth* taken on a retrospective estimate of ten years, terminating with 1800, and making an ample allowance for the difference between real and official value as it may affect the exports to Africa.

"It will be heard with pleasure, that the comparison, according to the present amount of the trade shews that the loss of it will be still less important to this country. Notwithstanding the tardiness to abolish it, which has been shewn to the disgrace of the country, something has been done; some measures have already been successfully adopted, to prevent the extension of that commerce. Since the year 1800, where my calculations end, what is called the foreign Slave Trade has been actually abolished, and the importation into the conquered colonies has been expressly prohibited, so that the remnant of the trade only, at this moment exists—that part which is confined to the supply of the old British Island.

"It appears, by the accounts which have been laid upon your table, and likewise from a book which may be deemed of very considerable authority when cited on this side of the question, (I mean Sir William Young's Common Place Book) that the average number of Negroes exported by us was 35,000: and that of this number 20,000 were sent to the foreign and conquered colonies, so that for the use of our own old islands only 15,000 were required. The proportion, then, referable to the former, was four-sevenths of the total number; the quantity belonging to the latter is three-sevenths, and therefore, when we talk of the abolition of the trade on this occasion, we must always remember, that four-sevenths have already been cut off, and that the measure which I now propose can extend only to the three-sevenths which remain engaged in the trade of the original colonies. Apply this to the calculations which I have already laid before you, and you will find that at this time, the amount of the capital employed in the Slave Trade, compared with the grand

total of the commercial capital of the nation, is not one thirty-fourth, but only about *one-eightieth* of that total.

" Indeed, I think, on other grounds it may be found to be ſtill leſs. The queſtion with theſe explanations, is reduced to the computation on the value and profit reſulting from the tranſport of 15,000 Slaves, this being the whole number which is retained in our original colonies in the Weſt Indies, and to which alone the bill applies.

" Now let us, for a moment, examine the value of theſe 15,000 Slaves. The goods which would be exported to purchaſe this number, I apprehend, would not amount to more than £250,000, but allow it to be double that ſum, or £500,000, and you will ſtate it much beyond the utmoſt to which the perſon moſt anxious to enhance their value would compute them, to which the Slave traders themſelves have ever ſtrained them. The exports of the year 1805, amounted to £55,000,000 which ſhews, that on the moſt ſanguine ſtatement which can be made by the advocates of this deteſtable commerce, it does not engage more than the one hundred and tenth part of the whole capital employed in our exports; and that is in fact as contemptible in its amount, compared with the lawful reſources of our wealth, as it is iniquitous in its nature. This view will relieve us from ſome anxiety regarding the extent of the miſchief, even allowing the conſequences to be as ruinous to one particular branch of our trade as they have been repreſented. But I muſt again repeat, that we are not to look to a total loſs, becauſe one channel may be for wiſe reaſons, intercepted; for, I cannot allow myſelf to doubt, when I attend to the multiplied reſources, to the active talents of mercantile adventurers, and to the aſtoniſhing expanſion of trade during all the difficulties of war, that if the capital employed in Africa were to be withheld from ſuch an application to-morrow, ſtill, it might be otherwiſe engaged to great advantage, and ſo as to preſerve the honour of the Britiſh people in the face of Europe, and of the world.

" But there are facts introduced into this ſubject, which it is true, multiply the matters connected with its conſideration; and although operative on the minds of individuals im-

immediately intereſted, yet cannot be viewed in a light of great national importance. The learned counſel who appeared on behalf of the town of Liverpool the other night, drew our attention to the place he repreſented, and to the dock duties there collected; and he ſtated, that if the trade ſhould be aboliſhed, the whole revenue of the dock duties might be loſt. And what was the amount of them? I believe it was not more than £5000. On an affair of ſuch magnitude, you will not expect that I ſhould detain you long with obviating the difficulties reſulting from the ſacrifice of ſuch a trifling amount. But to reſort to an eſtimate which now lies before me. In the year 1772, the total number of ſhips engaged in the Slave Trade, was 175. Seven years poſterior to that date, viz. in the year 1779, they were reduced, in conſequence of the war with America and France, to only 28; amounting almoſt, in this ſhort interval, to an effectual abolition of the trade. If what is repreſented of the fatal conſequences of the deſtruction of this commerce were at all correct, we ſhould expect to find, that in 1779 our great commercial ſuperiority was about to be extinguiſhed that our rich colonies were about to be ſurrendered, that our maritime ſtrength was about to be deſtroyed, and that the independence if not the exiſtence of the country was to be ſacrificed: yet we do find, that the proſperity of the country was not materially affected by this moſt alarming event. I ſhall be able to ſhew from the documents before me, however reluctant the inhabitants of Liverpool may be at this moment to confeſs it, that they had their full ſhare in this reduction of the trade, and that nevertheleſs the town did not ſuffer much from the decreaſe: theſe very dock duties, to which the counſel referred, not only did not fail, but were actually augmented.

" Sir, in the year 1772 I ſaid that the total number of ſhips in the Slave Trade were 175: only 100 of theſe belonged to the town of Liverpool, and it may excite ſome ſurpriſe, that at the ſubſequent date to which I have referred, viz. 1779, the number belonging to that place, was not more than 11. Thus, if Liverpool were to be ruined by the reſignation of the Slave Trade, its ruin was

now nearly complete: if the dock duties were to be loſt by it, they muſt be reduced to nothing. In the year 1772, when Liverpool had 100 veſſels in the trade, the dock duties amounted to £4552: in 1779 when only 11 ſhips of the town were ſo engaged, the dock duties amounted to £4957: being only £40 ſhort of their preſent produce, which has been magnified into a matter of ſo much importance, and £400 greater than their produce when the Slave Trade was tenfold.

"Theſe plain facts, depending on calculations the truth of which is aſcertained, will releaſe the Houſe from ſome uneaſineſs which might be occaſioned by incorrect and exaggerated eſtimates. If they had afforded any juſt repreſentation of things, it would be a little ſingular that we ſhould hear nothing from the city of Briſtol, which would be materially concerned in the ſame cauſe; as it would be moſt anxious to repair the loſs it had ſuſtained, and to divert its capital to this lucrative channel. The inhabitants of Liverpool may derive ſome conſolation, however, from the preſent ſtate of Briſtol; the Slave Trade is abandoned there, and yet its general commerce has ſuſtained no injury. The ſtate of London may alſo afford them ſome comfort. This city formerly poſſeſſed a conſiderable ſhare in the trade, which was relinquiſhed for ſeveral years previous to the conqueſt of the Dutch colonies; and yet, under this change, the greatneſs and proſperity of the metropolis were not in the leaſt degree affected.

"I hope then, that I am juſtified in ſaying, that with regard to the capital employed, it is not ſuch as to create ſerious alarm. But in point of fact, whoever examines the ſources of commercial gain, whoever attends to the principles of commercial greatneſs with diligence and impartiality, will diſcover, that all theſe fears have no foundation, and it will powerfully urge him to the concluſion I would draw, when he ſees the new markets that are opening, and the productive ingenuity that is applied, in multiplying the means of trading emolument.

"Upon this part of the ſubject, there is another point which has not been much conſidered by thoſe who maintain the oppoſite argument, at leaſt not by thoſe who have

pleaded

pleaded at your bar. It has been ſaid, that this is a trade of the utmoſt importance to the Britiſh Navy.

" Recollecting the ſituation from which I have recently withdrawn, and retaining all the jealouſy which it naturally inſpired for the maritime ſtrength of the country, I certainly do feel the greateſt anxiety to augment, by every expedient in my power, thoſe ſources from which the ſupply of the Britiſh navy is to be derived; and I will acknowledge further, that I entertain the higheſt reſpect for the authority of thoſe perſons, by whom this aſſertion has been made. But if I have ſatisfied you, that with regard to the commercial exports of this country, the abolition is not likely to produce an effect injurious to it, I feel doubly confident, in entering on this part of the ſubject, of convincing you, that the deſtruction of this trade will be beneficial to the navy; for I am not only perſuaded that it is of no advantage to our maritime power, but that it is injurious to it.

" The document to which I ſhall have recourſe at preſent, is nearly 20 years old. There has been none applicable to this immediate ſubject ſince the year 1789, when the inſpection of the muſter rolls was afforded to the Houſe. The trouble and expenſe of producing them, has prevented any ſubſequent examination of the ſame kind. I do not apprehend, however, that any thing has happened materially to alter the reſults, becauſe if any thing of this tendency had occurred, I have no doubt, but that we ſhould have heard of it from thoſe who have been anxious to ſupport this trade.

" General Gascoigne.—" What date did you mention?"

" Lord Howick.—" The year 1789. So likewiſe, if the regulations in reſpect to the middle paſſage had occaſioned any conſiderable diminution in the mortality, which I do not think they have done, I am perſuaded, we ſhould not have found it neceſſary to ſeek for this improvement now, ſince there are thoſe who have a ſufficient ſhare of zeal and avidity to prove to us this amelioration.

" Let us for a moment enquire into the difficulties and perils with which thoſe ſeamen have to contend, who engage

gage in this ſpecies of navigation. Among theſe, we may reckon their long expoſure on the inhoſpitable coaſts of Africa; the loſſes ſuſtained in the expeditions they engage in to procure Slaves; ſleeping upon deck unprotected from the inclemencies of the air; the ſeverity of the duty in watching the unfortunate victims. In none of theſe reſpects could the regulations referred to alter or diminiſh their perils; and I am afraid, the auſterity and cruelty experienced from the Slave captains, has received no relexation. I will not detain you with adverting to the fetid atmoſphere generated by the confinement of many perſons in ſuch a ſmall ſpace, but which is another cauſe of the diminution of the Britiſh ſeamen in that ſervice.

" From theſe detrimental circumſtances, (as appears by the muſter rolls of ſeamen in the Liverpool and Briſtol ſhips engaged in this trade), we find the mortality to be alarming indeed. Even when compared with thoſe of the Weſt India trade unconnected with Africa, the difference is as eight to one; and will any body tell me, that a trade producing ſuch an expenditure in the lives of Britiſh ſeamen, can be conducive to the ſupply of our navy?

" But it is not only the loſs by death; a very conſiderable reduction ariſes from the diſability incident to that line of duty. Is it not notorious with every officer employed on the Weſt India ſtation, that when endeavouring to augment the crews of his Majeſty's navy, they often cannot find, from this diſability, a ſingle man in a ſlave ſhip, fit for the King's ſervice? I ask again with confidence, is this the ſource by which the naval armament of the country is to be ſupplied?

" Again, Sir, we are told, that the king's ſhips in the Weſt Indies, could not be manned, if it were not for the aſſiſtance of the ſlave ſhips; not on account of the corporeal ſtrength of the crews, or of their knowledge of the duties of their occupation, but becauſe the hands employed in the ſlave ſhips are always eager to exchange their birth for a ſituation on board a man of war. A pretty good proof of what that trade is! (A general cry of hear! hear! hear! throughout the Houſe.) In all other trades in which ſhipping is engaged, the diſpoſition of the mariners

riners is to desert from the King's service to the merchants; on the contrary, in the African trade, the moment they have an opportunity, they are anxious to enter on board the Royal navy, and to abandon their own employment, where they have, in many respects, advantages, and always superior wages. Sir, what can be the rational policy of continuing a trade where the number of seamen is diminished so greatly by disability or death, and where the poor wretches, in order to rescue themselves as soon as possible from such consequences, have recourse to this expedient?

"From this general view we find that in the annihilation of the Slave Trade, we have nothing to apprehend for the commercial capital of our fellow subjects; nothing for our commercial, or for our national marine; and as far as the latter is concerned, the measure now proposed, is rather beneficial than injurious.

"We are next to consider the immediate effect upon the colonies in the West Indies. On this part of the subject, we are told, that a considerable loss would arise in those islands, and that it would be impossible to continue our trade with them, without this auxiliary of the slave importations: in other words, that the necessary stock for the culture of those territories could not be maintained, on account of the continual decrease of the black population.

"Before I go into any general statement, I should wish to examine a little in detail, how the assertion stands, on the evidence that has been supplied, applicable to this enquiry.

"We have, Sir, returns from various islands of the population previous to the year 1800; and since that time, directions have been given to ascertain its farther progress. To these inquiries, it is true, incomplete answers have been returned; but as far as they are obtained, they tend to confirm the statements and calculations which were made in 1792, by Mr. Pitt, and which I believe, produced universal conviction in favour of the principles for which I am now contending. The result was, that the decrease by death was found to be gradually diminishing, and that there was every reason to believe, that by proper care, by

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that care which the abolition alone was likely to produce, nature would in the Weſt Indies, as in every other part of the world, effect her own ends, and the population would maintain itſelf.

" In this new Parliament, in which there is a greater proportion than uſual of freſh members, I hope the repetition of ſome of the ſtatements to which I have alluded, will not be without its uſe.

" Taking up the eſtimate, then, from the principal iſland, which is that of Jamaica; from the year 1761 to 1768, the exceſs of deaths is 25,000, or annually ſomewhat more than 3500; and the number of Slaves at that time on the iſland, was computed at 157,000, giving a decreaſe, in one year, on the whole black population, of two and a quarter per cent.

" From the year 1768 to 1774 the exceſs in the deaths was 11,000, or about 1820 annually. The black population at that period was 180,000, which ſhews a decreaſe of a little more than one per cent.

" From the laſt of theſe periods 1774 to the year 1787, compriſing an interval of thirteen years, the exceſs of deaths was 20,000, or annually about 1500, which, according to the extent of the population of the negroes at that time, leaves the diminution about three-fifths per cent.

" But in our dates we can advance much higher: down to 1804 and 1805 we have partial returns, by which we find, that the exceſs of deaths in eight pariſhes of the iſland of Jamaica, in the courſe of three years, was 258; and comparing this number with the total population of theſe pariſhes, we have the ſatisfaction to find, that the exceſs of deaths at the lateſt period at which the account can be ſtated, is almoſt nothing, or one perſon in 1456.

" Reviewing then, theſe comparative eſtimates, we find that the exceſs of deaths has been gradually reduced, until the population is nearly competent to its own ſupport.

" It is again pleaſing to obſerve this progreſs of improvement under ſtatements made in the moſt unfavourable manner to the purpoſe I have in view, as they include not only the native negroes, or thoſe that are born in the Weſt Indies, but alſo the newly imported Slaves, among whom the mortality is conſiderable from a great

variety

variety of cauſes, and which claſs of perſons will no longer be included in our view of the comparative population, after this bill ſhall have paſſed. Excluding theſe, the Negroes, even in their preſent ſtate, may be fairly repreſented as competent to ſupport their own population. Thus much for the iſland of Jamaica.

" We will next attend to the ſtate of Dominica as to the ſame particular. The black population of that iſland is computed to be 20,788, of which the deaths, I think from 1799 to 1802, including a period of three years, amount to 1763, and the births as high as 1780; alſo including, in the ſame account, the Negroes newly imported, among whom the mortality is given at thirty-three per cent. after they are landed. We are able to purſue this calculation a little farther. Of the number recently imported it appears that 225 died. The old ſtock of the iſland was 19,803, on which there were 1750 births and 1523 deaths, leaving an exceſs in favour of the former of no leſs than 227 perſons; ſo that I think no doubt can be entertained by any one, that the iſland of Dominica, at leaſt, will ſupport its own population.

" In the Bahamas and Bermudas I am happy to obſerve, that the reſult of the computation would be more favourable, and we know that the average importations do not exceed 200.

" In Montſerratt and Nevis it has been found neceſſary to import very few, and I think it is a fair concluſion, from the general view before us of the Negro population in the iſlands, that there is every reaſon to believe that even if there ſhould be no ſubſequent improvement in the condition of the Negroes, from the effects of the ceſſation of the Slave Trade, yet, that no reduction of their numbers needs to be apprehended.

" I have already ſtated, that generally ſpeaking, it is hardly poſſible to conceive how the increaſe which takes place in every other part of the world ſhould be prevented in the Weſt Indies, if there were not ſome cauſes operating againſt the known laws and eſtabliſhed courſe of nature. Without this impediment certain it is, that the Slaves in

the Weſt Indies muſt augment in their numbers, as mankind do elſewhere in all the various communities into which the ſpecies is divided.

" How is it in other countries ? In America we know that the Slave population has increaſed with great rapidity, and from the accounts of Mr. King of the rate at which the Slaves have augmented in ten years, it is ſuppoſed that they would double their population in twenty years.

" We know that ſince it was determined that the Slave trade ſhould be aboliſhed in St. Helena and Prince of Wales iſland, the number of Slaves in thoſe iſlands, which had been diminiſhing, has increaſed ſince that new regulation. We are appriſed alſo, that in the Weſt Indies, the Blacks who are not expoſed to thoſe unfavourable circumſtances which the planters may at any time remove, rapidly increaſe in population ; as is the caſe with the Maroons in the iſland of Jamaica.

" We are alſo informed, that in the iſland of St. Vincent's, the Caribs, notwithſtanding the wars in which they were engaged, did increaſe in population, and the Slave population in Bencoolen the moſt unhealthy part of the world, received the like augmentation.

" If the population ſhould be found to increaſe in America ſo rapidly, and diminiſh in the Weſt Indies, is this difference to be attributed to the climate, or to the ſort of labour in which the inhabitants of the latter are engaged ? The culture of ſugar is one of the moſt ſevere and unhealthy employments, but a great portion of the people in America are occupied in raiſing rice, which is in employment equally unhealthy. What then is the cauſe of the ſuppoſed difference ? If we cannot diſcover any different explanation of this difficulty from other ſources, let us ſee how far we can be relieved from it by the aſſiſtance of the advocates for the Slave Trade, in the arguments with which they have thought fit to ſupply the counſel at your bar. They attribute the reduction of the numbers principally to two cauſes. Firſt, to the diſproportion of the ſexes, and ſecondly, to the promiſcuous intercourſe among them, and the general diſſoluteneſs of manners.

" With regard to the firſt, it may appear not to be capable

pable eaſily of deriving a remedy from the abolition; the other, I hope, would be materially altered by it. Attending, for a moment, to the former, I am ſorry to ſay, that after all the warnings theſe perſons have had, and after the ſolemn declaration of this Houſe, that the Slave Trade ought to have been aboliſhed, the fit precautions have not been taken. I am concerned to hear, that they now ſtate the diſproportion of the ſexes, as a plea for continuing the trade, which they ought long ſince to have counteracted by their own diſcretion. Yet, Sir, even in the preſent ſtate of inequality, I am happy to be able to deduce from the facts before me, that there is no ground for ſerious alarm.

" If in ſome of the iſlands there is no great diminution in the population annually, and in others there is a manifeſt increaſe, it muſt be the conſequence, that by degrees, that population, which on the whole is not diminiſhing from natural cauſes, will ſoon furniſh the uſual proportion of males and females, and it will not be long before the balance will be reſtored.

" I believe the great diſparity which has been ſtated, is not at all correct; it was ſaid, by the learned counſel, to be in the proportion of four or five males to one female. I believe two to one is too much, and indeed, I have never before heard it eſtimated at more than five to three. Let us look, for a moment, to the facts as they appear upon the returns from two of the iſlands. In Dominica, the number of males is 10,326, and of females 10,460. Alſo in Granada there is an exceſs of females; the males are 15,167, the females 15,964, and this is the more ſtricking, as there has been a great importation, in ſome years, to the extent even of 5000 into that iſland.

" I do not believe then, that even if the planters have not availed themſelves of the notice given them, their imprudence will have had the effect of occaſioning any progreſſive reduction of the population, ſince we find, that by the proportion of the ſexes, as well as from the eſtimates of the births and deaths, there is no reaſon to fear any great diminution.

" I next come to the ſecond cauſe aſſigned for the reduction of the numbers. The promiſcuous intercourſe of

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the ſexes, and the general diſſoluteneſs of manners among the Slaves. Here the remedy lies with the planters themſelves; a proper regard to the education of children, a fit attention to the morals of youth, and a diſpoſition to maintain the regularity of married life; all theſe, it will become the intereſt of the planters to promote when this trade ſhall be aboliſhed. And perhaps a more enlarged view, not only of their relative duties, but of their permanent emolument, would have induced a vigilant attention to theſe important ſubjects. At the ſame time, Sir, that we put an end to a trade founded in injuſtice, it is pleaſing to diſcover, that its termination is a ſource of improvement to the natives of the Weſt Indies, and that in every point of view it is introductory of practices and habits abundantly favourable to virtue and human happineſs.

" If I have been ſucceſsful in ſhewing, that the laſt of theſe ſources of the reduction in the population, reſts with the planters themſelves, I think the other matters I have to ſtate, will be conſidered to be ſtill more within their remedial power. I refer particularly, to the ſevere treatment the Negroes receive, and to the want of a proper attention to thoſe ordinary comforts which are neceſſary to their health as well as their happineſs. The effect of the abolition would be, to force gentleneſs and moderation upon the planters, if not from higher motives, yet from the naked principle of ſelf intereſt. But while I make theſe remarks, I would not myſelf commit that ſeverity I condemn; I would not apply unjuſt or ungenerous reflection to the great body of thoſe concerned in this trade, to whom miſmanagement or obduracy, call it what you will, is leſs to be attributed than has been uſually ſuppoſed.

[The noble Lord here cited a paſſage from Mr. Long's Hiſtory of Jamaica, which he ſaid was a work of great authority, in order to ſhew that it depended wholly on the planters themſelves whether their ſlaves encreaſed; that where planters were content with the produce of only one half a hogſhead to each Negro, or in ſome caſes of two hogſheads to three Negroes, an increaſe might reaſonably be looked for; but that when they endeavoured to enlarge their crops beyond that proportion, a decreaſe in the plantation Slaves was ſure to follow.]

" Mr. Long

" Mr. Long was no friend to the abolition of the Slave Trade, yet he affords abundant proof that mild treatment, the preventing all over-exertion, and general habits of humanity towards the Negroes will be likely, ultimately, to occaſion an increaſe in their numbers from natural ſources, unaſſiſted by importation.

" It may be ſaid, that this can only be done by leſſening the work performed, and of courſe diminiſhing the produce to be ſupplied.

" I do not know that the immediate quantum of produce may not be reduced, but I believe, that a judicious planter, looking beyond his momentary intereſt, and attending to remote conſequences affecting the improvement of his eſtate, will, by ſuch conduct, aſſiſt the cultivation of his territory, and promote his own ſubſtantial emolument, while he conduces to the comfort of his dependents. In proportion, then, as the planter is obſtructed in the addition to his numbers from abroad, he will be careful of thoſe at home, he will regard their eaſe and happineſs, and although for a time the quantity of produce may decreaſe, the real value of the lands will be enhanced, and his own permanent advantage be better ſecured.

" This principle will be particularly ſtriking, when we conſider its application to the female ſex under the peculiar infirmities to which from the delicacy of their conſtitutions they are expoſed. One of the cauſes which prevents the increaſe of population is, that the women are frequently employed in a way either deſtructive to the child with which they are pregnant, before its birth, or calculated to prevent the mother from adminiſtering to her infant offſpring the tender care, and ſalutary nurture, neceſſary to its ſupport. We know how exquiſitely ſuſceptible women are in ſuch circumſtances, and whatever inflicts pain, either mental or corporeal on the mother, affects her progeny, and fruſtrates the wiſe and benevolent deſigns of nature. Yet how many inſtances are there on every plantation, almoſt every day, of women, within three or four months of their time, being expoſed to the whip, and then, after child-birth, being forced to intenſe labour before their ſtrength is reſtored? That

both parent and child periſh, in many of theſe inſtances, I need ſcarcely add.

" I am perſuaded, and my conviction becomes ſtronger and ſtronger the farther I proceed in theſe illuſtrations, that when it ſhall become the obvious intereſt of the planters to attend to theſe circumſtances, the population of the Negroes will be found to anſwer all the purpoſes of cultivation.

" Another principal conſideration on which ſucceſs will depend, is, a fit attention to the food with which the Negroes are ſupplied. In ſome of the iſlands, I am ſorry to ſay, a ſufficient portion of nouriſhment to ſuſtain ſtrength and life, is not given to the Negroes. In St. Kitt's, for example, the legal allowance to Slaves labouring in the field, is conſiderably leſs, leſs by more than one half, than the priſon allowance in the iſland of Jamaica.

" Notwithſtanding the various topics to which I have adverted, there yet remain ſome other points to which I muſt requeſt your patient attention. From the arguments I have already uſed, I think it has been ſhewn that the general export trade of the country will not be much injured by this meaſure; that the ſupply of mariners for His Majeſty's navy will not, from this cauſe, be interrupted, but conſiderably augmented; and farther, not only that the population of the iſlands will not be diminiſhed by it, but that there is reaſon to believe, when theſe plans of amelioration are adopted, that the number of labourers may be expected rapidly to increaſe.

" But we are told, by thoſe who are enemies to this project, that it will occaſion a ſpirit of diſaffection in the iſlands, and I am glad to obſerve an honorable General (GASCOIGNE) who has taken an active part at all times in oppoſing this meaſure, particularly attentive to this department of the enquiry. We are told that we are holding forth a ſtimulus to rebellion, that we are preparing the way for the general deſtruction of the white inhabitants, and we are asked, " Is it prudent to inform an African, torn from his dwelling, from his relatives, and from his country, that this act is contrary to the maxims of juſtice and humanity?"

" Sir, is not the love of liberty, is not the attachment

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to the place of our birth, to the members of our family, and to the circle of our friends, implanted in the breaſt of man by the great author of our nature; and do you expect that the world ſhall wait to be inſtructed in this grand univerſal truth from the preamble of an act of Parliament? If the Negro have not learnt it from his own ſituation, and from his own ſufferings, he will not be excited to inſurrection when the introductory paragraph ſhall be read to him.

"The ſuppoſition is moſt abſurd—moſt thoughtleſs. I may confidently declare, that the planters and merchants themſelves, give no credit to it whatever. This at leaſt is certain, that if they did, never was the conduct of man ſo little regulated by diſcretion. Does not the Houſe know, that during the many years in which the debates on this ſubject have continued, all the agitation which has here exiſted, all the motions which have been made, all the reſolutions which have paſſed, have been printed and circulated, without doubt or fear, by the planters in the iſlands? And is it now to be ſaid, that any of theſe magnified evils are likely to be the reſult of this juſt recognition ſtated in the preamble? It is obvious from a thouſand circumſtances, that in the colonies, where the nature of Slaves is underſtood, no ſuch chimerical apprehenſions are entertained. Have the members of this Houſe ſeen Reports of the Jamaica Legiſlature, printed in their own gazettes, ſtating at length, and with great preciſion, the moſt ſucceſsful means by which a general inſurrection might be organized, and furniſhing, as completely as ſuch publications are capable of doing, detailed information to the Negroes of a digeſted plan of operations, ſo that they might convert their ſilent diſcontents into open rebellion, whenever they were ripe for deciſive action? After this may we not conclude, that all we have heard of ſuch alarms is mere declamation, and in no way connected with the matter of buſineſs now before us? It is, indeed, the moſt unfortunate time to introduce ſuch an argument, when the manifeſt object of this act, is to ameliorate the condition of the Negroes, and by rendering them happier, to conciliate their affections. We might have imagined, that during the twenty

years

years in which this queſtion has been diſcuſſed with ſo much warmth and animoſity, the ſpirit of rebellion would have expanded itſelf throughout the iſlands, and that we ſhould have heard of nothing but war and carnage. Inſtead of this, the fact is, that during no period have ſo few inſurrections exiſted as during the interval I have named, when this inquiry has been purſued within the walls of Parliament, and has occupied the attention of all men out of doors.

But there are ſome curious ſtatements, which are given for the purpoſe of ſhewing the probability of future inſurrections from new cauſes. They ſay, that the neceſſary conſequence of the non-importation of freſh Negroes will be the increaſe of work, and the diſaffection of the labourers. The whole of my argument proceeds upon this; that the oppreſſive fatigue to which the Negroes are expoſed, will be diminiſhed. Now, I will venture to affirm that new Slaves have never been imported in order to alleviate the toil of the old ones; they have been brought to ſupply the place of thoſe, who have reſigned life beneath the weight of their labours, and to clear and cultivate new lands. It is utterly inconſiſtent with the whole hiſtory of thoſe ſettlements to ſuppoſe, that the importations were made for the relief and comfort of the reſident Negroes.

Among the extravagant aſſertions which are made on this point, we are told, that it is a great ſource of conſolation to thoſe reſident Negroes, to hear of the arrival of their countrymen on the ſpot to which they have been themſelves conſigned. What? when they are labouring under the moſt ſevere afflictions, can it be a relief to them to ſee others brought to partake in that fullneſs of miſery and horror to which they have been doomed themſelves? To ſee a wife, perhaps, or a child, or a parent, forced into the ſame wretched ſituation, probably under a different maſter? Can this be a ground of ſatisfaction; or is it not rendering their woe yet more complete, if indeed the cup of affliction be not already filled? Any thing ſo contrary to the diſpoſitions of man, can only be ſtated by thoſe who wiſh to repreſent the African character as radically vicious—as altogether different from the reſt of the ſpecies—

cies—and incapable of receiving the ſtamp of humanity. This is, however, wholly inconſiſtent with the juſt deſcription of the natives of that continent. It is true, that they are in an uncivilized ſtate, which cannot wholly be deprived of its features of barbarity; but their natural diſpoſitions are as mild and gentle as any that belong to human beings placed under ſimilar circumſtances of uncivilization. I cannot, then, think that there is any ground to apprehend, that a ſpirit of revolt will be at all produced by the prevention of theſe importations.—While we are attending to the ſecurity of the iſlands, we ſhould not forget, to what order of perſons the danger is principally to be aſcribed. It is moſt clearly eſtabliſhed in evidence, that the claſs of Negroes from which inſurrection is to be feared, conſiſts of thoſe recently imported from Africa, expoſed to new injuries, ſtill ſmarting under the wrongs they have been compelled to endure, and ſuffering from the recollection of the ſituation which they have loſt.

" We are deſired to look to the preſent ſtate of St. Domingo, as affording a tremendous example of the caution neceſſary to be uſed in effecting any material change.—This argument, which is employed to recommend the continuance of importations, is the very one to which I would reſort, in urging their ceſſation. I would refer eſpecially to the melancholy condition of St. Domingo, into which large importations had been made contrary to the principles of ſober diſcretion and ſound policy. I believe that the number of Slaves rapidly introduced into that iſland, had a great effect in bringing about its ſeparation from Europe. But the chief cauſe of this change muſt be traced to that extraordinary event of modern times, which has been the fruitful ſource of ſo many calamities in every part of the world; I mean the French revolution. The fact was, that the white inhabitants of this ſpacious and productive iſland, were divided into two parties, each of which endeavoured to obtain the aſſiſtance of the Blacks, in order to gain the aſcendancy. The ſituation of St. Domingo is far from ſhewing that any evil conſequence will reſult from the preſent meaſure, though it ſhews the pernicious effect with which the immediate

emancipation of the colonial Negroes muſt be attended; and I believe, there is no one ſo hardy as not to have his fears powerfully excited, if the whole Negro population of the iſlands, in their preſent condition, were to be emancipated. When to theſe cauſes inceſſantly operating in the iſland of St. Domingo, we add, the heat and violence of the contending parties, employing all the implements of a cruel and ſanguinary ſyſtem againſt each other, with unrelenting vengeance, and by turns inflaming the paſſions of the Negroes with all the arts of inſinuation, can we be ſurprized, that ſuch events ſhould have taken place? I hope, Sir, that no ſuch impelling cauſes will produce the ſame diſaſters in our own iſlands; and of this I am convinced, that large importations of Negroes are at all times a prediſpoſing cauſe, and muſt increaſe the danger. On the whole, I preſume that the ſituation of St. Domingo, inſtead of ſupplying any reaſon for rejecting the meaſure, furniſhes a ſtrong ground of recommendation.

" In addition to all this, not wholly to leave the ſubject of St. Domingo, we are told, that this iſland is only a few hours ſail from Jamaica, and that from the facilities its proximity affords, endeavours have been uſed to excite inſurrection in the neighbouring colony.

" Sir, you will diſtinctly recollect, that when this objection was ſtated at your bar, I was willing to give the learned gentleman the full benefit of the admiſſion, that ſuch endeavours had been uſed to diſturb the peace of that iſland. But what is the anſwer to ſuch repreſentations? I ſay, 'Secure yourſelves from danger by conciliating the affections of your Slaves. By good treatment perſuade them that you regard their happineſs; make them feel that health and life are worth preſerving. If you perſevere in the ſeverity which has been practiſed, they will never be attached to you. If you import numbers who can have no feeling of love or reſpect for you, who can entertain no ſentiment but hatred and vengeance, your danger will be extreme.'

" This is not, Sir, mere idle theory: it is confirmed by experience. Look to the ſituation of Surinam, where the Slaves under the dominion of the Dutch received the worſt treatment. The conſequence was, wars, inſurrections,

rections, and general diſobedience. The hiſtory of thoſe unfortunate people ſhews, that where they meet with kindneſs and generoſity, inſtead of a ſpirit of revolt, order and allegiance prevail among them, and they will even exerciſe their valour in the protection of their maſters, againſt thoſe who are inclined to reſiſt the ſubſiſting authorities.

" On all theſe grounds, I think the abolition of the Slave Trade is deſirable; and although we have, ſomewhat contemptuouſly, been called theoriſts, by thoſe who are enemies to this meaſure; we poſſeſs the ſingular advantage of having all the facts, and all the experience of mankind excluſively in our own favour.

" But it is ſaid by the learned counſel at your bar, that the danger is increaſed by the diminution of the numbers of white people which will neceſſarily reſult from the abolition.

" I confeſs, I was aſtoniſhed at this propoſition, and I waited with ſome impatience to learn, how it would be made out. They told you, that many perſons went from hence in the expectation of realizing a large property; and that in ſuch expeditions, attended with ſuch ſacrifices, ordinary profits would not ſatisfy their hopes. Now, ſaid the learned counſel, by the confined proſpect of advantage which would in future be preſented to ſuch adventurers, theſe active and uſeful members of ſociety would remain at home, and therefore the white population would be diminiſhed.

" In this point of view, the white and black population muſt neceſſarily be a queſtion of proportion, and the argument is a little extraordinary, if reſorted to by thoſe who repreſent the black population as likely to be reduced, nay, to be extinguiſhed, in a few years.

" But I do not think that the view of any great and immediate advantage induces thoſe adventurers to quit their native country. I rather apprehend, that the motive is to obtain a livelihood under circumſtances of urgent neceſſity; that the perſons who embark for this purpoſe, are uſually thoſe who find it difficult to procure ſubſiſtence at home; and ſeeing it in this light, I do not think there will be any great difference in the numbers of

the emigrants. We now hear, for the firſt time, the Weſt-Indian Planters repreſenting the propriety of having a large proportion of white people on the iſlands; and if we look to their own conduct, this muſt appear to be a new diſcovery of colonial policy. If this had been a notion formerly entertained, we ſhould have ſeen ſome means taken, by which the white population might be increaſed, and the blacks reduced. On the contrary, we obſerve only the moſt active exertions, by importations, to augment the latter, but hardly any endeavours whatever uſed to extend the former. Are there then no trades, no modes of uſeful occupation, in which white perſons might be employed in the Weſt Indies? Are the whites there to be only known in a ſtate of ſupineneſs and torpor? Without doubt, a great proportion of Weſt-Indian labour is more ſuited to the habits and conſtitutions of the blacks, than to that of other deſcriptions of the people. But ſtill, there are numerous ſituations, and a great variety of duties, which are at leaſt equally ſuited to the whites, and which, from indolence or ſome other cauſe, are at preſent improperly filled, and very imperfectly diſcharged. My expectation from this meaſure is, not that a ſmaller number, but that a greater proportion of whites will try their ſucceſs in different branches of buſineſs. Among others, the cooperage on the iſlands is an important branch of induſtry, and the whites are at leaſt as dexterous in this buſineſs, and as well adapted to it by their conſtitution; yet blacks are conſtantly engaged in it. It is extremely ſingular, that we ſhould, at this time, hear of the anxiety of the planters to increaſe the white population, when we know, from the beſt authority, that every poſſible diſcouragement is given to marriage among the whites dependent on them, and that one of the greateſt, nay, in general, an inſuperable objection to an overſeer, would be that he had a wife and family.

"We have heard much of the emigrations from Scotland; and a noble friend of mine has both ſtated the means of providing for ſuch perſons in America who are inclined to leave the country of their birth, and has exemplified his doctrine by a judicious experiment. But it ſhould appear by this new alarm of the Planters concerning the

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diminution of the white population, that thoſe emigrants need not look for an aſylum on the northern continent. In the iſlands the planters ſhould be ſolicitous to receive them, and admit them to all the advantages to which their timely arrival muſt entitle them, if the alarm in queſtion has any real foundation.

" On the whole, Sir, I think this laſt ground of diſſatisfaction, is as little tenable as any of the others which I have ſtated, and I may venture with ſome confidence to hope, that the Houſe will not think it a ſufficient motive for rejecting a bill, which not only comes ſo powerfully recommended from another place, but which has ſuch ſtrong pretenſions to favour in its own merits. If I were required to ſtate what would moſt effectually conduce to the ſecurity of the iſlands under the preſent viciſſitudes in human affairs, I ſhould preſent this meaſure, as the moſt effectual expedient for that purpoſe. The neceſſary conſequence of this meaſure will be, that the Negroes will become attached to the ſoil, that they will acquire property and intereſt, that they will have ſome ſtake in the country, and that the moſt cogent motives to inſurrection and revolt will be withdrawn.

" Theſe, Sir, are the principles upon which I ſupport this propoſition; and here, perhaps, I ſhould take my leave of the ſubject; but before I ſit down, there are a few general points which are proper to be noticed, from their having recently attracted obſervation. We are told, Sir, that if this be a meaſure the object of which is to do juſtice, we ought not only to aboliſh the Slave Trade, but to aboliſh Slavery itſelf. All I can ſay in anſwer to this objection is, that I truſt the final reſult of this bill will be the ultimate abolition of Slavery—not by any violent change, but by the natural operation of cauſes, not very difficult to enumerate and to trace. Without the aſſiſtance of poſitive laws, I ſincerely hope, that Slavery will wear out; that as it has ceaſed in the dominions which once belonged to ancient Greece and Rome, chiefly by the ſupply of freſh Slaves ceaſing with the foreign conqueſts of thoſe ſtates, and as it has diſappeared in modern Europe by the acquiſition of property, and the diffuſion of knowledge — ſo, likewiſe, it will gradually

gradually withdraw from the Weſt Indies, when the inhabitants are prepared for enjoying the bleſſings of liberty, by a milder ſyſtem of treatment. What I now contemplate, has already partially taken place in the United States. In the Spaniſh and Portugueze colonies, in South America, where they have their condition improved by general regulations, ſome traces of a progreſs like that which I allude to may be remarked. But, Sir, we need not croſs the Atlantic to diſcover this ſort of improvement; Great Britain has herſelf riſen from the ſame lamentable ſituation, by the ſilent, yet powerful influence of the ſame cauſes. And here, Sir, I muſt detain you, to make one additional remark. We are not wholly without experience of the progreſſive effects of civilization upon the Negroes. We know, that in all the ſtates of America, excepting one, the Slave Trade is aboliſhed. In South Carolina, only, it is admitted. But the abolition of this commerce is not the only ſtep they have taken; meaſures have been adopted for the gradual emancipation of Slaves, and upon the eſtates of ſome perſons, I believe, particularly that of the late General Waſhington, the Slaves have been emancipated. Now are there any of thoſe dreadful conſequences in North America on account of this change, which the enemies of the abolition predict; and is it not univerſally known, that the condition of Slaves in America partakes of as much happineſs as ſuch a ſituation is ſuſceptible of?

" So much for the effects of emancipation in America. I ſaid, truly, that I hoped the abolition contemplated in this bill, would prepare for the ultimate abolition of Slavery itſelf, and I have ſtated this, in purſuance of thoſe principles of juſtice, which I have endeavoured conſtantly to keep in view in the courſe of this diſcuſſion. I ſay to the Weſt India Planters, I am ready to do you juſtice, but I cannot do it by the ſacrifice of juſtice with reſpect to another country. Why not emancipate the Slaves? I would avoid this, becauſe I would avoid injuſtice. Such an act would bear the character of the utmoſt cruelty. It is juſtice to the Slaves, as well as to the Planters, which prevents my recommending ſuch a meaſure. From the unfortunate condition of this people, it might renovate all

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thoſe ſcenes of horror and deſolation which have been exhibited in St. Domingo, and it could not produce, what is alone deſirable, a ſtate of rational and orderly ſociety.

" Thus, Sir, looking at all the matters which bear on the ſubject, I have no doubt of the propriety of paſſing this bill. But there is one other argument, not applicable to our own individual caſe, and it is this: We are told, that if *we* abandon the trade it will be of no utility, for other nations will take it up, and purſue it without thoſe ſalutary reſtrictions, by which, under the authority of law, it is here regulated. If there be any real ground for ſuch an apprehenſion, it muſt be admitted, that the preſent is the moſt fortunate period in which we could adopt the principle of this bill. But let us look to the nature and extent of the argument. They ſay, that the French and the Dutch will not aboliſh the trade. Thoſe nations aſſert the very ſame thing of us: ſo that the reaſoning moves in a circle, and the trade, like the circle, on ſuch an argument, can have no termination. Sir, I am far from being ſanguine in thinking that any liberal meaſure of this nature is likely to be adopted by the government of France; but at all events, let us relieve ourſelves from the oppreſſion of this diſgrace, and let that country, which is contending with us for power, in one of the greateſt conflicts recorded in the annals of mankind, at leaſt declare herſelf to be our inferior in virtue: or let her, if ſhe pleaſe, aſſume a virtue which ſhe does not poſſeſs—let her, from any motive ſincere or hypocritical, benefit the ſpecies; but whatever be her conduct, let us reſcue ourſelves from this foul and odious diſhonour.

" I ſaid, that this was a moment peculiarly favourable for effecting the purpoſes of this bill. The Slave Trade of France and of Holland is deſtroyed by the operation of the war. In Denmark, as in America, it is aboliſhed. There remains no country of Europe capable of continuing it but Portugal; and the extent of their commerce in this branch, I believe, bears only a ſmall proportion to our own. Therefore, during the continuance of the war, at leaſt, as far as reſpects France and Holland, the trade muſt be relinquiſhed, and the objection on that ground cannot now be material. How long the war will laſt, is

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a queſtion much beyond all human calculation to reſolve; but if, in conſequence of the abolition of the trade by this country, the co-operative part on the coaſt of Africa ſhould ceaſe, I ſhould hope that whatever might be their inclination, France and Holland would find it difficult to reſume it.

" I have now, Sir, troubled the Houſe with nearly all I have to ſay on this moſt important ſubject, yet I am conſcious that I have very ill diſcharged the duty I have undertaken: I have, however, the ſatisfaction to know, that there are thoſe now preſent, who can amply ſupply all my deficiencies.

" There is but one more general argument, which now preſents itſelf to my mind. It is ſaid that the trade is ſanctioned by antiquity, and that it has been countenanced by the higheſt authorities, and by the greateſt men that ever diſtinguiſhed the annals of our country; and we are told, that the names of Clarendon and Locke appear among thoſe of its ſupporters.

" I have, Sir, as profound a reverence as any man for thoſe two eminent perſons, yet, perhaps, the former I ſhould not be haſty in quoting upon any queſtion relating to freedom; the latter, I acknowledge, was not likely to maintain any cauſe which was hoſtile to it. But, Sir, it is proceeding too far upon the ſcore of authority to ſay, that he gave his ſanction to what he did not expreſsly condemn. It has been correctly affirmed, that ſuch an argument would tend to fruſtrate every ſpecies of improvement; for great men are to be found in every period, and in every condition of ſociety. The Reformation itſelf, ſo valuable in its effects throughout proteſtant Europe, muſt have been rejected, becauſe Sir Thomas More, and other great and virtuous characters, were catholics. There is nothing ſo baſe and derogatory to human nature—nothing ſo oppreſſive and deſtructive to mankind—which might not on ſuch a principle receive its vindication; and in another place, it has been accurately obſerved, that on this argument the practice of torture might be revived and defended. In proportion as the abuſe is more conſpicuous, the argument from authority becomes ſtronger. A ſlight matter in the multiplicity of affairs might eſcape

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the attention of theſe extraordinary men; but what was very remarkable, what was highly prominent, could not eaſily elude the vigilance of Clarendon and Locke. The argument, if it prove any thing, proves too much for the purpoſe of thoſe who employ it. It might be uſed againſt Chriſtianity itſelf, becauſe ſome of the wiſeſt and beſt men reſiſted all the force of its evidence. It may be eaſily ſuppoſed, that the Slave Trade, in its infancy, had not attracted the particular attention of Clarendon and Locke. It is known, that the latter was a member of the African Company, and it may be as true, that from the unavoidable imperfections in the human underſtanding, he might not have examined the ſubject with that care and impartiality which he was accuſtomed to diſplay in the elucidation of more general topics.

" I contend, that it is the duty of the Houſe of Commons to examine for itſelf, and after deliberate attention, to decide according to its own conviction. Yet, if we are to reſt upon authority, I do not think the authorities are all on the other ſide. There are names entitled to the higheſt reſpect, and one of theſe is that of the Preſident, Montesquieu, who entertained moſt ſtrongly the ſame opinion of the Slave Trade with the Friends of the Abolition.

" But above all, I would cite the authorities of two of the moſt extraordinary men that ever lived—who were the pride and glory, and the moſt precious ornaments of their age and country—I mean Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, who examined the ſubject with all the force of their capacious minds; who on this queſtion, alone, diſmiſſed all animoſity—all difference of opinion—and united their endeavours, with one accord, for the good of mankind.

" Let us pay the beſt tribute to their memories by adopting this meaſure, if we are ſatisfied upon the general grounds of reaſon and experience that it is right; and let us thus raiſe to them a monument, more ſplendid than any which human ingenuity can deviſe. With Mr. Fox, to accompliſh this was the firſt wiſh of his heart, and it was the hope which quivered on his lips in the laſt hour of his exiſtence. Having mentioned theſe authorities, I am ſure it will not be expected of me, that I ſhould

notice any other: after ſuch illuſtrious names, only inferior ones could be introduced, which would be of little aſſiſtance to the cauſe in which I appear.

" I truſt that all differences, as to the great principle of the bill, have been removed. We may doubt with reſpect to the mode and the time of the Abolition; but on the juſtice and neceſſity of the meaſure, in ſome way, and at ſome time, I truſt there is no disagreement; and I certainly do anxiouſly look for the ſupport of thoſe gentlemen, with whom I have the misfortune ſo widely to differ on many other ſubjects.

" This bill, then, is moſt worthy the attention of the Houſe of Commons, and after many ineffectual attempts, I hope that it will at laſt be carried. My duty is terminated; my feelings are thoſe which are natural to me on an occaſion, which I muſt ever conſider as one of the greateſt in my life. I have endeavoured, to the utmoſt of my ability, to point out the effects of this meaſure on the various perſons, and on the complicated intereſts which it has been ſaid to embrace; whether affecting the Planters, Merchants, or Negroes, in all its relations and bearings. Upon theſe grounds it receives my cordial ſupport, and upon theſe I leave it with confidence to the Houſe."

General GASCOIGNE. — " I feel it my duty, Sir, notwithſtanding all that has been ſaid this night, to declare my ſentiments upon the preſent bill. The conteſt I have to ſuſtain is not only with men of ſuperior talents, but alſo with popular opinions and prejudices; but, however this may be, I ſhould think it a dereliction of my duty not to declare, that after having given the ſubject the moſt mature conſideration, I am confirmed in my former opinion. I am ſuppoſed, Sir, to have ſaid, on a former occaſion in this houſe, that I was ſo charmed with the Slave Trade, that were it now to be eſtabliſhed for the firſt time, I would willingly paſs over once more the ſame ground. Sir, the words I employed were, that ſeeing all the conſequences which had reſulted from the Slave Trade; looking at the flouriſhing ſtate of our colonies; and knowing that the Navy derived the greateſt poſſible benefit from this

this commerce, and that the revenue derived from our plantations was ſo great and ſo important; I would be the firſt to move the Houſe to eſtabliſh the trade in queſtion.

" The noble Lord in the courſe of his ſpeech ſaid, that he believed all who heard him were more converſant with the ſubject under diſcuſſion than himſelf, and in that opinion I do moſt fully accord with him. If the noble Lord had done that which common candour required; I mean if he had permitted evidence to be adduced, he would have received the information he required, and would not have ventured to deny that to which he would not liſten. But he was fully aware that there might be danger in doing it, and he ſaid, 'No, we will hear none; 'if we have evidence we may riſk the bill.' And then, as an excuſe, he tells the Houſe, that the teſtimony amounts to nothing more than matter of opinion. And what does the noble Lord himſelf offer to convince the Houſe? He brings forward nothing but matter of opinion, and that of much more queſtionable authority than any which I ſhould have ſubmitted to its attention.

" The noble Lord adverted to the evidence given in 1792, reſpecting the practice of kidnapping Slaves; and he ſaid that he believed that it ſtill exiſted even at the preſent day. But is a ſingle proof of this before the Houſe? Is there a ſingle detail, nay even a ſolitary inſtance, in ſupport of the aſſertion? It was merely ſaid that the noble Lord believed it to exiſt; and upon ſuppoſitions like theſe he calls upon you to approve of this bill. But the noble Lord ſtates that many of the enormities which took place in the Middle Paſſage ſtill exiſt, notwithſtanding the paſſing of the bill intended to regulate them; but what evidence does he offer to prove this poſition? There was not a ſingle inſtance adverted to in the courſe of his argument which was derived from information of the exiſting ſtate of the trade, and was not founded on facts which happened ſome 30, 40, or 50 years ago; and as long as he can bring into his ſpeech ſome detail or ſtory of whatever authenticity, or from whatſoever ſource it may proceed, the noble Lord is perfectly ſatisfied, if it only ſupports his opinions, whether it

is of a recent date, or whether it took place ſome 30 or 40 years ago; but perhaps the noble Lord has ſo fully made up his mind that he requires no evidence at all, and he thinks that others are equally ſatisfied upon the point with himſelf.

" No man on earth will ever ſay that Slavery is preferable to liberty: that is an aſſertion that will not be made: but there may be matters of policy where it will be neceſſary to conſider what relates to ourſelves, rather than to wander into remote conſequences and effects upon others; and conſidering the intereſts which I repreſent, and the dignity of thoſe perſons whom I have to defend, I truſt that the indulgence of the Houſe will not be withheld upon this occaſion. The noble Lord has applied the terms robbers and murderers to thoſe who carry on what he calls this inhuman traffic; and he applies the terms not only to the traders, but alſo to the whole Weſt Indies and its inhabitants. They, he ſays, are guilty of robbery and murder. Does he mean to ſay that they are ſo devoid of humanity that there is no juſtice among them in their treatment of the Slaves; that they have no regard to the dictates of mercy? The meaſure before the Houſe is of the higheſt importance; and I do maintain that there never was a ſubject of ſuch magnitude preſented to its conſideration, where ſuch a want of candour was ſhewn on the part of thoſe who ſupport it.

" It is next ſaid, that the various perſons who appeared at your bar are not competent witneſſes, as being intereſted in the deciſion. I ſhould like to know who would appear at your bar, if thoſe who have no intereſt in the queſtion did not come forward to give evidence? The noble Lord however had not candour enough to admit their teſtimony to be heard. He ſaid, that there was nothing to be offered but private opinion, and at the ſame time he takes credit for his candour. Sir, it is a mere mockery of the name.

" Then, Sir, the noble Lord enters into calculations which I can by no means allow, and he proves inferences which I confeſs I am not maſter of. Perhaps if I had an opportunity of looking into his packet of papers, I might be able to anſwer them; but at preſent, as they are not on

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the table, or regularly before the Houſe, [Lord Howick here obſerved that they were on the table, and before the Houſe] I muſt conſider them only as nothing better than the bare aſſertion of the noble Lord; for I know, indeed, uncontrovertibly, that a great part of them is not founded in fact. But ſince that ſtatement was made, I have had an opportunity to obtain information, and, without troubling the Houſe by going into it now, I will juſt prove that thoſe aſſertions were not correct. I do not deny that the exports may be what the noble Lord has mentioned, but I deny that part of his ſtatement which applies to the trade of Liverpool, as being wholly founded on miſtake. He ſays, that in one year, 136 ſhips ſailed from that port to the coaſt of Africa, and that in the next year only eleven were fitted out for the ſame deſtination: but I rather imagine that the noble Lord muſt have omitted the figure 1, and that it was in fact 111 ſhips.

" But, Sir, is this queſtion to be tried in the abſtract point of view as to the trade on the coaſt of Africa? Material as it is with regard to no leſs than 30,000 ton of ſhipping, or as it reſpects the employment of no leſs than 6000 ſeamen, or the fate of a capital to the amount of 2,000,000 ſterling; material as the meaſure may ſeem as to theſe circumſtances; yet, in compariſon to the whole object of the bill, it is ſuch an inferior conſideration as ſcarcely to be worthy of notice, as hardly to deſerve a thought.

" The noble Lord tried all in his power to prove to the Houſe, that to the Navy, as far as it was concerned, the meaſure would be a gain, a benefit, and not a diſadvantage. And how did he do this? By telling you of the deaths which occurred among the ſailors on their return home from a voyage to the coaſt of Africa, in the year 1789. But if the noble Lord was ignorant on this ſubject, why did he not conſult the noble Lord in the other Houſe, his predeceſſor at the head of the Admiralty, with whom I know he has been in the habit of converſing upon many ſubjects? He did not, becauſe he knew that he ſhould obtain information which he would be unwilling to receive; and he would have heard that there were now few

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inſtances where the actual deaths amounted to more than three out of each 100 ſeamen.

" If the parties before the Houſe had been permitted to call their witneſſes, it would have been proved to the ſatisfaction of every one, that there were no more deaths on board any of theſe Slave ſhips than generally fall to the lot of any of his Majeſty's men of war. The noble Lord, however, has it in his power to move for the neceſſary documents; and they would determine whether the aſſertions he has made, or the facts I have ſtated in oppoſition to them, are correct.

" The noble Lord then adverts to the deficiency of population in the Weſt Indies, and without thinking it neceſſary to mention his authority, he ſtates that the diſproportion of the ſexes is not greater than two to one, inſtead of four or five to one, as ſtated by the learned counſel. Now I do ſay, that it is a known fact, that the diſproportion is to the extent of at leaſt four to one, if not five to one; but I dare ſay, if I were to attempt to call witneſſes to prove it, the noble Lord would immediately object, and I ſhould not be permitted to adduce the evidence.

" The noble Lord then proceeds to the queſtion of emancipation. The preſent ſubject has now been under conſideration for 15 or 20 years, and the Negroes have had ſufficient time to learn that the African Slave Trade is contrary to humanity; and if an inſurrection were to take place, it would be from the effect of the preſent meaſure; and the only reaſon why rebellion has not yet appeared among the blacks, is becauſe the abolition has never been effected. But now you have taken care to declare, in the very preamble of the Bill, that the African Slave Trade is contrary to juſtice, humanity, and ſound policy; and if a French officer were to land on any one of the iſlands to induce the ſlaves to riſe againſt their employers, I do not know words more fit that could be uſed in framing the proclamation, than " Whereas the African Slave Trade is contrary to the principles of juſtice, humanity, and ſound policy." Nay, the effect of this preamble will be almoſt as great as if a French General had actually landed,

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and had placed theſe words at the head of his proclamation.

" Next, Sir, the noble Lord queſtions the neceſſity of having Slaves at all, and in his mature judgment he thinks that ſomething like machinery might be adopted in the place of at leaſt a part of the Slaves. However this may be, it ſtrikes me as a moſt extraordinary circumſtance that the planters, during all their experience, ſhould never have thought of this ſcheme of the noble Lord's, nor have adopted ſo admirable a plan as this is ſuppoſed to be.

" All the arguments of the noble Lord view this moment as the proper time for carrying this meaſure into execution; but I think, and I hope to convince the Houſe, that this is the moſt improper period at which it could poſſibly take place. Will any man tell me, notwithſtanding the bold unſupported aſſertions of the noble Lord, reſpecting the rigour in the treatment of the Slaves—which he cannot prove, and therefore will not permit me to diſprove—that the traffic, as carried on by us, is not conducted with more humanity than it is by any other country concerned in it.

" Now that trade which you throw away as inhuman, France and other nations will be anxious to acquire, and this you muſt prevent; you muſt prevent the Slave Trade from being carried on by other countries, or your attempt at abolition is worſe than vain. It is a fact too well known to need proof, that the Portugueſe are ſo anxious to learn and adopt this commerce, that they have actually written to this country to be informed what ſhips are moſt proper to carry on the trade.

" But beſides theſe reaſons for rejecting the meaſure, the bill itſelf, I contend, can never be carried into effect. It would be impoſſible for all the frigates in his Majeſty's navy, without the concurrence and co-operation of the Colonies and Planters, to prevent the introduction of Slaves. And not only is the bill defective here, but it is alſo inefficient in other reſpects; for it does not prohibit the introduction of Slaves into America.

" The noble Lord gave you a calculation of the loſs which would be ſuſtained by the abandonment of the

African

African Slave Trade; and I believe he was in that ſtatement in a degree correct; but he did not produce to your view the loſſes which would be incurred by the colonies from the adoption of this meaſure. Let us for an inſtant take a view of the amount of the property which would be ſwallowed up or thrown into the hands of the enemy. The value of theſe colonies, in their preſent ſtate, is no leſs a ſum than £90,000,000, and the debts due are as high as £3,000,000, while the annual profit derived to this kingdom from the imports from the Weſt India iſlands, is at leaſt £10,000,000; and the loſs of this immenſe property is the proſpect we have in view while arguing this meaſure. But the noble Lord, notwithſtanding all this evidence, is determined upon the bill; while at the ſame time he will not give you the leaſt information reſpecting the aggregate loſs which will inevitably follow its adoption.

" Now, Sir, I have little further to ſay; but there is a doubt with me upon which I ſhall merely touch, and I ſhould not have ventured to do even this, had it not been that the ſubject has already been adverted to. I very much doubt how far your legiſlative authority can extend ſo as to enact this bill to be carried into effect in the Weſt India Colonies; — how far you may ſay to the Planters, " You have had enough, you ſhall receive no more Slaves." We have, Sir, ſeen already the means of ſupplying a country with Negroes; yet we have not experienced the method of obſtructing and preventing completely thoſe ſupplies.

" It is well known that the cultivation of Jamaica has been for ſome time principally in coffee, the production of which requires fewer hands than is neceſſary when the ground is brought to perfection for the growth of the ſugar cane, and therefore you will put a ſtop to all improvement; it is impoſſible for theſe plantations to go on, for the meaſure you are about to adopt will inevitably deſtroy them.

" With reſpect to the emancipation ſo much talked of, and the effects of which are to be ſo happy upon the ſtate of the Colonies, I heartily wiſh that the noble Lord may have formed juſt concluſions, and that mine may be erroneous.

neous. But our ſituation is moſt tremendous. The loſs of the colonies may be the conſequence, and if it be, the downfall of this empire will ſurely follow.

" As an humble individual I have preſumed to offer my ſentiments to the Houſe, not with the hope of convincing, but merely as feeling it a duty I owe to thoſe whoſe intereſts I repreſent. All I venture to hope is that a gradual abolition might take place. In this way only can you attain your end. By the preſent meaſure you are injuring moſt materially the ſituation of your colonies, and you tell the planters in the ſame breath, "Suffer your goods and your ſavings to be taken away; ſuffer your property to be ſnatched from you, for you do not know your own intereſts."

" I do hope and truſt moſt heartily that my apprehenſions will prove unfounded, if they do I ſhall rejoice moſt ſincerely; but I do fear that ere twelve months have elapſed, you will hear accounts at leaſt of diſcontent and conſpiracy, if you do not actually hear of open unbridled inſurrection.—Before that period has expired our diſpatches will be filled with tales of rapine and murder; we ſhall hear the Slaves exclaiming, " Blacks be no more ſlaves, why we be ſlaves?"

" But then, ſays the noble Lord, what right have we to make thoſe bear the bondage of their parents, who have been born under the protection of the Britiſh Government; a'd though this meaſure is but the abolition of the *trade*, it may lead to emancipation in the gradual lapſe of time. But, Sir, let the Houſe reflect for a moment upon the poſſible conſequences of paſſing this bill. I do ſay, and in this opinion I ſhall receive ſupport, that if there be a method of obtaining that which is now ſought, without inſu'ting the feelings of the Colonies, that method ought to be adopted, and this bill ought to be negatived. However, Sir, I may approve of the firſt introduction of Slavery, it is not my intention to offer any opinion why it ſhould now exiſt, but this I muſt ſay, that if I had been alive at the time the Slave Trade was firſt adopted, I ſhould moſt certainly have given it my hearty ſupport; but as the preſent ſtep is to be the preliminary to emancipation itſelf, before we ſanction it with our conſent, let

us ſeriouſly reflect upon thoſe conſequences by which it may be attended. Do not let us ſuppoſe that the evidence which would have been brought to your bar, or that the reaſoning employed by the learned Counſel, is but a mere mockery—and not really founded upon facts. Let us therefore have time to deliberate cooly before we adopt a meaſure, the conſequences of which all human energy may not be able to prevent when they ſhall have taken place, but which a little foreſight may avoid."

Mr. Roscoe. — " Before I give my vote on this occaſion I am anxious to ſatisfy my own feelings, and in endeavouring to do ſo I ſhall at the ſame time perform the duty I owe to the inhabitants of the town of Liverpool, which I have the honour to repreſent.

" Whatever may have been ſuppoſed of the intereſts or inclination of that corporation, they are by no means unanimous in ſupport of the trade; but on the contrary, a large and reſpectable body have voted for the abolition, and I ſhould diſappoint their wiſhes if I were not to give my ſupport to this bill. After the long and attentive conſideration which has been beſtowed on this ſubject through a period of twenty years; after the diſcuſſions reſpecting it, which have been ſo often repeated, and ſo ably conducted; after the preſent Bill has had a full examination in the other Houſe; and after the zeal and ability with which the noble Lord (Lord Howick) has now introduced the queſtion to your regard; I think it will be wholly unneceſſary for me to enter upon any general argument, or into any ſtatement of minute particulars.

" There is only one argument which I will uſe, and it is ſo ſimple and obvious that barely to mention it is ſufficient. If you place the human ſpecies like any other ſet of beings, in a ſituation of comfort, and give them the common neceſſaries of life, from the eſtabliſhed law of Nature they muſt progreſſively increaſe; and it is only by their not being placed in ſuch a ſituation, that the Slaves in the Weſt Indies experience ſo much diſtreſs in their preſent ſtate. But by the paſſing of this Bill you will do a great and eſſential good; for you will inſtantaneouſly ameliorate the ſad condition of the Negroes in the Weſt India

India Iſlands. No longer will the maxim that it is better to buy than to breed a Slave, be impreſſed upon the mind of the planter; for it will then become his duty, and he will find it alſo his intereſt, to provide for his own neceſſities by ſupplying the wants of his Slave.

" From this controuling cauſe I can entertain no doubt but that by a moderate improvement of the ſituation of the Negro, the population of the iſlands may be kept up; and I can diſcern none of thoſe detrimental effects which are ſo much apprehended. On the contrary I am ſanguine enough to believe that inſtead of the meaſure being the ruin of the iſlands, it will prove their ſalvation, and that whatever fears may be entertained by thoſe concerned in the trade it will ultimately be diſcovered to be the primary foundation of their true wealth and proſperity.

" In the conſideration of this queſtion it is impoſſible not to advert to the preſent ſtate of Africa. Upon that point we know, Sir, that by this trade we have contributed in a very great degree to promote and encourage thoſe dreadful wars by which that continent is ſo frequently agitated. We know that we have done ſo, by ſupplying them with the neceſſary implements of deſtruction; that we have put arms into their hands that they may turn them againſt their fellow creatures. When, Sir, this nefarious traffic ſhall be put an end to; when it ſhall be no more their intereſt to deal in blood, there will be ſome hope of peace and tranquility being reſtored, and no doubt that country itſelf will be much improved.

" With reſpect to the time of the operation of this bill very different opinions might be entertained, and it has been the idea of many people, and among the reſt, of myſelf, that if the meaſure had been propoſed many years ago a gradual abolition would have been preferable. It never, Sir, was ſuppoſed by me, that the trade ſhould be continued to be carried on a year or a day againſt the happineſs of the Africans, becauſe private intereſt was concerned, or becauſe it was for the benefit of thoſe who were engaged in the traffic; but before we ſanction a meaſure of this extenſive and important nature, it appeared neceſſary that we ſhould weigh it with all poſſible caution,

" I will endeavour, Sir, to ſtate the view which I entertained on this ſubject. From the great length of time which is occupied in bringing the Slaves from the interior of Africa, I thought that if this traffic were ſuddenly ſtopped, there might be great danger of a maſſacre of thoſe upon the coaſt who had been brought there for ſale. I made enquiries to ſatisfy my mind upon this point, and I found that the Slaves often came down in large bodies, and if no ſhips appeared, or no opportunity offered of diſpoſing of them by ſale, it might be followed by ſome dreadful conſequences.

" Feeling anxiety from this cauſe I enquired what time would be neceſſary in order to apprize the native dealers of the abolition of the trade; and I was told that ſix or nine months might be ſufficient. I think then that the time limited in the preſent bill will be a period ſufficiently ample to prevent the perpetration of theſe maſſacres on the coaſt, and therefore as a friend to the gradual abolition of this trade, conſidering the length of time during which the queſtion has been agitated in parliament, and the time which is yet to expire before the bill is to be carried into operation, I do moſt heartily accede to the meaſure.

" But, Sir, there is one more obſervation which I have to make, and it reſpects the queſtion of Compenſation. We are not, Sir, in our conſideration of this point, to confine ourſelves to the narrow principle of compenſation to one ſide only. Juſtice, Sir, is due to all parties, and we muſt not bind ourſelves within ſuch limits as would permit us only to conſider thoſe who are connected with us under the ſame government and laws. We muſt not only conſider them; but we muſt alſo remember that juſtice is due to the injured ſons of Africa, who have ſo long ſuffered the moſt wretched ſlavery, from our avarice and ambition. It would be indeed the very height of injuſtice and wickedneſs to permit this commerce to be conducted at the expence of the lives and liberties of the inhabitants of Africa for the paltry contemptible advantages which individuals might derive from it. I do, Sir, however truſt and hope that the time will come when thoſe parties who ſhall really be injured by

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the operation of the bill will appear before this Houſe to receive ſuch damages as they may be able to prove themſelves entitled to.

" But, Sir, there is a compenſation of a better and a higher nature of which I hope the country will not be diſappointed; I mean the application of the capitals now engaged in the Slave Trade in ſome extenſive and honourable purſuit, adapted to the active genius of this commercial nation. In the ſituation in which we now ſtand, charged with heavy taxes, and a burthenſome expenditure, it is natural for the people of this iſland to look to every ſituation by which that expenditure may be ſupported. It is natural for them to extend their view to all ſides, to look to the eaſt and to the weſt; and I truſt that the merchants injured by this meaſure will be included in the general conſideration of the effects of the preſent bill, and be amply repaid for the loſs which they may ſuſtain by the abolition of the African Trade, by opening to them other ſources of commerce. We muſt unite our endeavours to promote this deſirable object, and we muſt oppoſe the great continental reſources of our formidable enemy by our vaſt colonial power. It ſeems to me that the fate of the empire is ſo wound up with our foreign poſſeſſions that we cannot be too attentive to thoſe prudent maxims of policy by which they would be preſerved.

" I will not, Sir, treſpaſs further upon the time of the Houſe; I have ſpent my whole life in the town of Liverpool, and for thirty years I have never ceaſed to oppoſe this nefarious traffic; and I conſider it to be the greateſt happineſs and the moſt ſatisfactory event of my exiſtence, that I am on this important occaſion to join not only with the friends of juſtice and humanity, but with the advocates of ſound policy, in putting a period to the African Slave Trade.

Mr. LUSHINGTON. — " One of the neareſt connections I have in the world, has a great intereſt in this important queſtion: yet whatever may be the concern which thoſe I love moſt may have in it, when I read in the preamble of the bill that the Slave Trade is inconſiſtent with juſtice, humanity, and ſound policy; admitting this to be a correct

correct ſtatement of the fact, I can have no option whether to preſerve or abandon the trade; for, Sir, I have never been accuſtomed to balance the ſocial duties of juſtice and humanity againſt the commercial eſtimates of exports and imports.

" I ſhall trouble the Houſe with a very few words, and the firſt topic to which I ſhall advert, regards the population. One of the learned counſel who addreſſed you from the bar (Mr. Dallas) ſtated the proportion of males and females to be as four to five of the former to one of the latter. I do not know that it is perfectly regular to comment on what the learned counſel have ſaid at the bar of the Houſe of Lords; but there the comparative proportion was given as five to three. It is a little ſingular, that in a queſtion of this conſequence, the gentlemen were not more uniform in the inſtructions they gave to their advocates.

[The honourable Member here cited a paſſage from the work of a profeſſor of Peterſburg, illuſtrative of the queſtion on progreſſive population, under the circumſtance of a great diſproportion of the ſexes. He then proceeded.]

" I fully agree with thoſe who think, that paſſing this act will lead the Planters to be more attentive to ſome of their moſt important intereſts. I am of opinion, that in ſome of the iſlands which are moſt deficient in cultivation, as Trinidad, the returns will not be ſo great as if the importation of Negroes were continued. There ſome loſs may be ſuſtained, but thoſe adventurers who have engaged in recent ſpeculations, have not the claims upon us to which the old eſtabliſhed coloniſts are entitled.

" The Houſe will permit me to ſay a few words on a ſubject which has been treated with great ability by the noble Lord (Howick), and which has ſince attracted ſome obſervations from the honourable General; I mean the tendency of this trade as it affects our Colonies. In anſwer to the remark made by the noble Lord on the evidence which has been adduced on this ſubject, the honorable General affirmed that there exiſted no ſatisfactory teſtimony. But are not all the facts in evidence before the Houſe? A variety of perſons have been examined here, and

and their details have been compared with the muſter-rolls of the ſhips. Out of 5000 men engaged in the Slave Trade, it appears that 1120 were on the dead liſt, and that many more were broken down and diſabled. We read of men in this ſervice being brought to a captain of a man of war, who complained, that they offered wretches unfit for the purpoſes of navigation; and a medical gentleman tells us, that nine out of ten were rendered abſolutely unfit for duty. Sir, if I were to go into the examination of the number of our brave men who have been ſacrificed during the laſt twenty-five years, it would be eaſy to ſhew, that the diminution was greater than the whole aggregate loſs in all our other ſervices put together.

"Sir, the cauſes of ſickneſs and death are inherent in this trade; and whatever may have been the legiſlative regulations applied to it, no act can alter it, until the ſtatutes of your Parliament can change the nature and conſtitution of human beings. In beating about on the paſſage, the ſailors are expoſed, without covering, to all the inclemencies of the torrid zone, and this is one great ſource of mortality.

"The diſpoſition of men to enter into this ſervice has been miſrepreſented. It is not a trade the hazards of which ſailors are willing to encounter, if they can avoid it. In this ſervice the wages are from 35 to 40 ſhillings per month, when in others, they are only from 30 to 35. But there is ſtill another difference unfavourable to the mariners on board African ſhips. Under the articles of agreement, the captains are allowed more authority, and exerciſe greater ſeverity, than they can do in other ſituations. A Gentleman on the other ſide obſerved, that the ſailors are ſo anxious to quit the Slave ſhips, that they will ſwim through ſharks to obtain acceſs to the ſhips of war on the Weſt Indian ſtation. Conſider, then, what the nature of this ſervice muſt be, what a deteſtation they muſt have of it, eſpecially when you recollect, that the conſequence of their forſaking the ſhip often is, that they forfeit all their wages, all their earnings in the hard ſervices in which they have been engaged. Inſtead of the officers of his Majeſty's navy being diſpoſed to continue this trade, I ſhould rather have thought, that they would have called

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upon you to relieve them from it, as it is attended with ſuch a prodigious waſte of the ſeamen, neceſſary to the ſupport of our marine.

" I will not trouble the Houſe any longer, I will only ſay, that whatever may be the conduct of Portugal, or of any other country which may have facilities for the proſecution of this trade, let us not continue a ſpecies of commerce, inconſiſtent with every principle of juſtice and humanity."

Mr. Fawkes.—" I feel myſelf compelled to invite your attention to fulfil what I conſider to be the moſt ſacred of all duties. Sir, this trade has conſtantly received from me all the oppoſition which a humble individual, like myſelf, could direct againſt it, and to contribute to its fall, by my ſuffrage, on this important occaſion, will be matter of pride and exultation to me to the lateſt moment of my life.

" In the conſideration of this queſtion, the condition of Africa is not to be neglected, and we are naturally led to advert to her ſtate, by conſidering the mode and circumſtances under which the unhappy victims of this commerce are obtained. The miſeries of ſavage life are indeed ſufficiently deplorable, if half the calamities of which we have heard, are attendant upon it. Inſtead of augmenting this wretchedneſs, to which, in the courſe of nature, they are expoſed, it was our duty to have ſoftened, or to have removed them.

" Sir, it is ſaid, that the wars of Africa are not our own, and that they are the neceſſary conſequence of the diſorganized ſtate of that continent. I am not perfectly convinced of the correctneſs of this obſervation, yet that wars can be wholly prevented, either in civilized or uncivilized countries, muſt be the dream only of a viſionary. That wars ſhould be promoted for the purpoſes of avarice, is a reflection moſt oppreſſive to our feelings. Are we to add fuel to the paſſions which are ſo active in diſturbing the repoſe of mankind; and can we doubt of the fact, that hoſtilities are encouraged, to anſwer the deſigns of this trade, when we ſee the horrid ſpectacle of the ſlave merchant hovering in the ſeat of the contending armies,

to

to purchaſe thoſe of the ſame nature with himſelf, in order to conſign them to hopeleſs captivity?

"Numerous are the artifices by which the melancholy victims of this trade are ſeduced. In ſome caſes they are tempted to beaſtly intoxication, and are firſt deprived of their reaſon, and then of their liberty. The facility which our ſupineneſs has afforded to thoſe who are engaged in this nefarious traffic, has led to great enormity. Whatever may be the reſpect a man has entertained for the ſacred inſtitutions of his country; when removed to a diſtance from the tribunals where the law is adminiſtered, he too often ſtifles the generous emotions of his conſcience and a degradation of mind enſues with the deſcription of which it is not my intention to excite the painful impreſſions of the ſenſibility of the Houſe.

"But the vaſt diminution of the human ſpecies occaſioned in the purſuit of this trade, demands the moſt ſerious attention. You have heard enough of thoſe floating dungeons in which health and life are ſacrificed; you have heard enough of that violence by which the natives of Africa are forced from their families, from their friends, and from their country; and when I am appealing to a Britiſh aſſembly on theſe acts of aggreſſion and of atrocity, I know that I am addreſſing a tribunal where all the principles of juſtice and humanity are recognized.

"Sir, it is by diſtinguiſhing inſulated tranſactions, that we bring a ſubject of a general nature home to the heart and to the underſtanding of man, and revive in him the generous ſympathies of his nature. Let us attend an unhappy Negro after the paſſage to the Weſt Indies, during which all his feelings have been outraged, and ſuppoſe him landed in our colonies. He has there to endure a beaſtly expoſure, his ſtrength and proportions are to be examined, and being conſigned over to the beſt bidder, he is crouded with the reſt of the Slaves, and contemplated by his maſter with no more reſpect than the inanimate moveables of his eſtabliſhment; and he has ſcarcely any other law but the will of his proprietor. Is it poſſible to conceive a ſyſtem more pernicious both to the ſuperior and to the dependant? Will the ſupreme authorities in this country tolerate a traffic, which commences in injuſtice,

and terminates in murder? Sir, I truſt they will not, I believe they have diſcovered that it is high time the arm of the Slave Traders ſhould be arreſted, and that they ſhould be taught, that to attain the reward of opulence, they muſt practiſe humanity. That barbarity of the moſt ſhocking deſcription has been exerciſed, is an unqueſtionable fact, unleſs the evidence on your table be an artful fabrication.

"You will believe, Sir, that the greateſt inconſiſtencies can be attempted to be reconciled in argument, ſince you heard the other night that the condition of the Slave in the Weſt Indies is equal to that of the Engliſh peaſant. Shall I hear from the gentlemen learned in the law, who have preſented themſelves at your bar, that they poſſeſs the invaluable privilege of trial by jury? Shall I hear from the moſt ſanguine advocates of the trade, that they have the choice of their employers; that they can exchange a cruel perſecutor for a gentle and generous maſter; that they have a law inflexibly juſt, which knows no diſtinction of perſons; and, above all, Sir, that they have the patriotic feeling which throbs in the boſom of every Engliſhman, when he liſtens to the name of his country? Alas, Sir, theſe are bleſſings they can never enjoy. Let thoſe who talk of the happy condition of Negroes offer that the diſcontented part of them ſhould be conveyed to a place of freedom at the public charge. Do they think that one or two worthleſs members only of this fraternity would accept the propoſal? Sir, if ſuch a propoſition were made to them, the whole Britiſh navy would be ſurcharged with the vaſt burthen.

"With regard to the queſtion of expediency, it has been argued with ſo much ability by a noble Lord that I ſhall not think it neceſſary to requeſt the attention of the Houſe to any thing I have to ſuggeſt, as to that particular.

"Among the ſtrange notions that have been promulgated, it has been ſaid that the holy ſcriptures countenance ſlavery. Such an aſſertion appears to me to be a manifeſt abſurdity. Can any ſerious mind entertain the idea that that Being who came into the world to ſave ſinners, could ſanction by his precepts, or by his example, a ſyſtem which produces the very enormities he appeared amongſt mankind to prevent. If any thing ſo contrary to the purity of his nature, and to the benignity of his attributes, had been introduced

introduced into thoſe volumes which we have ſo long held ſacred, it would tend to ſtrip the goſpel of its truth, and to rob mankind of their hopes.

" Shall we have the mortification to ſee, after ſo many ſtruggles for the improvement of the condition of the moſt wretched of the ſpecies, that ſlavery is to be tolerated, nay, is to be admired, in the ſeventh year of the nineteenth century. Whatever may be the changes of time, whatever may be the accidents of life, whatever may be the tricks and expedients to obſcure truth, Slavery will always expoſe her native deformity: to uſe the language of an admired writer, ' Still, Slavery, diſguiſe thee as thou wilt, ſtill thou art a bitter draught; and though thouſands may have been made to taſte of thee, thou art not leſs bitter on that account.'

" Sir, a benevolent Providence has directed the progreſs of man to civilization, by ſlow and ſilent, but by certain ſteps. This improved ſtate of ſociety may be obſtructed by wars, and a variety of other cauſes, interfering with ſocial intercourſe and happineſs. It is our duty not to fruſtrate, but to co-operate with the intentions of that good and great Being, and inſtead of interfering with his deſigns, we ought to have broken the fetters of the African, and to have facilitated his advance towards that ſtate of enjoyment of which our nature is capable.

" Before I ſit down, I am impelled by every ſentiment of duty and gratitude to ſay ſomething expreſſive of my ſentiments to that honourable friend of mine, who has ſo long, and ſo ably ſupported this cauſe. The induſtry and ability, the patience and the ſpirit, with which he has advocated the rights of humanity, will raiſe a monument to his memory.

' Quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens
Poſſit diruere, aut innumerabilis
Annorum ſeries, et fuga temporum.'

" There is no one who congratulates that honourable member with more ſatisfaction than I do on the occaſion of the glorious victory, in ſo eminent a degree to be attributed to his own perſeverance and fortitude.

" Sir, it is not impoſſible that we may have to contend for the liberty of England on Engliſh ground, and while

we are expoſed to theſe conflicts, let us by the purity, the integrity, and the humanity of our own conduct, prepare ourſelves for the encounter; at leaſt, let us not go forth to battle with the feeling of the wrongs of Africa on our conſcience. Let it not be ſaid that the cries of Africa were heard and her injuries were not redreſſed. Let us atone for the miſeries which this inauſpicious period has brought upon us by performing this ſplendid act of beneficence and mercy."

General GASCOIGN ſaid a few words in explanation.

Lord MAHON.—" I have not, Sir, the preſumption to ſuppoſe that I can, by what I ſhall ſay, add any thing to what has been ſo ably and eloquently ſtated by the noble Lord who opened the debate; and I ſhould not have this night offered myſelf to the attention of the Houſe, were it not that I feel it a duty I owe to myſelf to give my opinion on the moſt intereſting topic that perhaps was ever agitated within theſe walls.

" In whatever light, or under whatever circumſtances, this queſtion may be viewed; or whatever variety of notions may have been expreſſed upon the preſent occaſion, I can entertain but one feeling; my mind can be occupied by but one opinion upon the ſubject under diſcuſſion. Without adverting to public opinion or popular ſentiment upon the evidence which is before the Houſe, there is there exhibited ſuch a picture of the miſeries endured by our fellow-creatures who are the ſubjects of the trade, that I conceive it a duty which I can never forego to endeavour by every means in my power to alleviate their ſufferings. The teſtimony already upon the table has fully eſtabliſhed the practice in this traffic of every cruelty that the human mind can conceive. We trace the unhappy Negro dragged from his home into a Slave-ſhip, and from a Slave-ſhip conducted to a diſtant country, where he is not only treated with contempt and ignominy, but with harſhneſs and barbarity. But, Sir, if theſe cruelties were not actually practiſed, if theſe enormities did not in reality exiſt, it is a ſufficient ground for conſenting to the preſent meaſure, that he wears the bonds of ſlavery. But that they do exiſt,

exiſt, not a doubt can be entertained. That they are torn from all the endearments of the domeſtic circle; that they are ſnatched from all the happineſs of ſocial intercourſe, and caſt into the fathomleſs gulph of miſery, no one can attempt to deny.

"If we act upon that great and extenſive moral principle, of doing to others as we would wiſh that they ſhould do to us, decreed from ſuch high authority, not a member of the Houſe can for a moment entertain a doubt reſpecting the propriety of the adoption of this meaſure. The deciſion of the Britiſh Parliament will be recorded on the page of hiſtory, and will be handed down to the lateſt poſterity as one of the moſt glorious events in the annals of the world.

"That this traffic is contrary to the dictates of humanity and to the firſt principles of juſtice is moſt obvious; and I call upon the Houſe moſt earneſtly, in the name of ſuffering humanity, in the name of injured nature, and in the names of the unfortunate Negroes, to ſtop the career of cruelty and barbarity. That this trade is contrary to the foundations of ſound policy is equally clear, and upon that point, we have not only the evidence to be derived from our own obſervation; but we have alſo the teſtimony in its favor of that great man of whom it is impoſſible to ſpeak but in terms of the higheſt admiration and reſpect for his known and well-tried integrity, and for his moſt tranſcendent abilities. And we may venture, without heſitation, to declare, that more ſhocking inſtances of tyranny, oppreſſion, and injuſtice, have exiſted in no nation under the ſun than are the fruits of this deteſtable trade. Upon what foundation can we preſume to aſk for the aſſiſtance and protection of God, while we witneſs ſuch ſcenes of diſtreſs and miſery without emotion. We can never hope to receive from the Supreme Ruler of princes, who decides the fate of empires, who can either exalt to the higheſt degree of human grandeur, or in the moment of his wrath cruſh us beneath his foot, if we ſtill continue to countenance this trade, or longer witneſs unmoved the unhappineſs of our fellow-beings."

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Lord MILTON. [We are ſorry to ſay, that his Lordſhip addreſſed the chair in ſo low a tone, that we found it extremely difficult, in the gallery, to collect a few particulars of his ſpeech.]

" This ſubject has occupied the attention of Parliament for many years, and I hope will at laſt be decided in a way honourable to the country. The arguments employed by the gentlemen on the other ſide, have not had the effect on my mind they were intended to produce on the Houſe: inſtead of leading me to approve of the continuance of the Slave Trade, they have added to my views of the policy of its abolition.

" It has been ſaid, Sir, that the population of the blacks in the Weſt Indies cannot be kept up, without the importations which it is the object of this bill to prevent. I am ready to admit, that in the preſent condition of the Slaves, in which the benevolent intentions of nature are obſtructed, this defect is one among the many injurious conſequences of ſuch a ſituation; but I cannot believe that any country which the Almighty has created is ſo curſed, as not, in the ordinary courſe of events, to be competent to provide for its own population.

" An honourable General (GASGOIGN) ſays, that the women in St. Helena are not expoſed to the ſame ſeverity of labour as they are in the Weſt India Colonies; and on this ground he explains the increaſing population in that ſettlement. Here, at leaſt, he has afforded an argument, not only againſt the correctneſs of his own facts, but againſt the propriety of his own concluſions; and he has furniſhed us with an additional motive for expecting, that when proper care ſhall be taken of the Slaves in the iſlands, there, as well as in every other country in the world, the population will be ſupported.

" Among the authorities that have been cited, I am moſt of all aſtoniſhed, that any gentlemen ſhould refer to the Scriptures, as if they afforded any argument in vindication of this trade.

" No one acquainted with the bleſſings of civilization, with that ſocial intercourſe which ſubſiſts between man and man, in the moſt improved condition of ſociety, will look merely to the Weſt Indies, and the ſtate of the blacks

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in thoſe Colonies, to aſcertain the evils attendant upon this trade: he will attend to the Continent of Africa, and he will ſee there how greatly the progreſs of civilization is impeded by the active inſtruments of this commerce. Sir, I am not one of thoſe who can balance between juſtice and profit. I would have juſtice ſupported, and humanity regarded, whatever might be the conſequences reſulting from the fulfilment of theſe imperious duties; and whatever may be the advantages the Liverpool merchants derive from the trade, I have no heſitation in declaring that it ought to be immediately aboliſhed.

" A friend of mine, now no more, whom I am proud to have known, recommended theſe principles to my early youth; it is a valuable legacy that he has left me, and feeling ſtrongly from the recollection of his virtues, and of his energies employed in this great cauſe, I ſhould not diſcharge the duty I owe to his memory and to my country, if I did not lift up my voice in favour of the abolition of this trade."

Mr. BATHURST.—" I have been anxious, Sir, to catch your eye to expreſs my feelings on the preſent queſtion, becauſe I do not coincide in opinion with thoſe gentlemen who have already ſpoken on this ſubject. The manner in which the noble Lord who opened the debate has conducted this diſcuſſion has relieved me in common with the reſt of its members from great difficulty. He has truly ſtated that at this time of day the queſtion under conſideration is not whether the African Slave Trade is a traffic to be encouraged and promoted by this country. That topic indeed was at one time introduced into debate, but it has long ceaſed to be a matter of diſcuſſion within theſe walls; and it is now a general opinion to which every body agrees that it is a commerce contrary to the principles of juſtice, humanity, and ſound policy, and which ought not to be ſuffered to exiſt. The ſubject therefore is now reduced to this point, whether or not it can, with ſafety, with any probability of ſucceſs be aboliſhed: that, Sir, is the ſimple point which is now at iſſue.

" The arguments which have been adduced on this occaſion are intended to ſhew that the Colonies are at the preſent

preſent moment capable of ſupporting their population, and it is to that point chiefly that the few words I ſhall addreſs to the Houſe to-night will be confined. With reſpect to the trade itſelf (the trade from the Coaſt of Africa to the Weſt Indies) I have no heſitation in profeſſing my entire concurrence with the noble Lord. But when he adduces arguments to ſhew that this is the time for effecting the abolition, he admits to me that that is at leaſt a ſubject on which I and other members of the Houſe may entertain conſiderable doubt. I am certainly not one of thoſe whom the noble Lord ſuppoſes are ſetting themſelves up againſt the principles of juſtice and humanity; but on the contrary if it be found that the meaſure can be carried into the deſired effect at the preſent moment, I ſhall be one of the firſt to give it my cordial ſupport. At the ſame time I am not of opinion that juſtice is only due to thoſe perſons who are the ſubjects of the trade.

"It muſt be admitted on all ſides that unleſs it be ſhewn that the ſtate of population in the Weſt Indian iſlands is ſuch that there is a proſpect of its being maintained, two things muſt neceſſarily follow, either that the Africans muſt be continued as they have been to be imported into the iſlands, or that the planters and merchants and ultimately the kingdom itſelf muſt ſuffer by the abolition. This muſt be the caſe unleſs means are taken for the introducing ſome other ſource of ſupplying our Colonies with labourers; added to which, we have a pretty ſure proſpect that upon our abandoning it, France and Holland will enter into the trade. In ſhort it does appear to me upon the fulleſt conſideration I have been able to give the ſubject, that unleſs you inſure the probability of the iſlands being able to keep up their population, in order to maintain that population means will be found either legal or illegal, by thoſe whoſe intereſt it is to obtain Slaves for the cultivation of their eſtates.

"Then, Sir, with reſpect to the ſtate of population, what has been ſaid is far from being ſatisfactory; for they compare the births of children with the deaths throughout the iſland, and by diſcovering them to be equal, they ſay that the iſland is capable of maintaining its own population. I contend, on the contrary, that the mere ſtate-

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ment of the births compared with the burials is not a ſatisfactory ground on which we can ſay that at this moment the Iſlands are in a proper ſtate for the abolition; becauſe, although on ſome eſtates the population may be maintained, or even increaſe, yet on others it will decreaſe.

" But it has been aſked to-night, what country is there in the world beſides not capable of keeping up its population. It has been ſaid too that the diſproportion of the ſexes, of four to one, or perhaps five to one, is not correctly given. The truth is, that there exiſts ſome diſproportion, and this is the reaſon why they cannot be conſidered to be in a natural ſtate. It will be recollected however, that even the few females are not diſtributed in a regular proportion over the country, there is no ſyſtem of equalization eſtabliſhed; and on ſome plantations there is a ſuperabundance of males, while on other eſtates there is a ſuperabundance of females; and this may even be the fact without looking to extreme caſes in order to ſhew that the population will not increaſe. But it may be ſaid, that the time will come by degrees when there muſt be an equality in the ſexes, and when the population may be kept up without difficulty. This may be ſo I have no doubt, and therefore after a proper period the abolition may be ſafely effected. All that I am labouring to ſhew is, that this is not the fit time, under all circumſtances, for paſſing the preſent bill.

" But, ſay they, Whoſe fault is it that the population is not maintained; is it not the fault of the Planters themſelves? If I were even to admit that it was the fault of the Planters, that does not affect me; I am only arguing, that this inequality of the ſexes, if there be no further importations, muſt exiſt at leaſt for a time; and I leave it to the Houſe to judge, how far it is poſſible, whether this inequality is or is not as great as it has been ſtated to be, that the population can be maintained without freſh importations.

" But it is ſaid, Sir, that the Planters of the Weſt Indies have had ſufficient notice that this meaſure would ultimately be adopted, and that therefore they might have been providing themſelves againſt the period when the bill ſhould paſs. Now, Sir, I think that argument is not

quite fair; for it is well known that this is the only time when there has been a probability of agreement to this meaſure. Until this period, the other branch of the Legiſlature has been complained of for not having concurred in the meaſure, and till now there has been no diſtinct intimation of the intentions of the two Houſes.

" But, Sir, it is aſſerted, that a great many years ago this Houſe voted that the Slave Trade ſhould be aboliſhed, and that the period then fixed has expired without any endeavour on the part of the Planters to prepare themſelves againſt that event; but the ſame reaſon which I before mentioned of the improbability of the concurrence of the Legiſlature in the meaſure, will alſo apply to this argument.

" Much has been done, Sir, ſince that period; for we have paſſed a law which is in itſelf virtually an abolition of the African Trade, and which has cut off the ſupply to foreign Colonies, and by preventing any freſh ſhips from being brought into the trade, will at leaſt put a ſtop to it after a time. My objection, however, to this is, that though it is a gradual abolition, yet that the act is not definite: ſome time ſhould be fixed, after which it ſhall not be carried on. It is fit, in my opinion, that both branches of the Legiſlature ſhould give a ſolemn pledge for the ultimate abolition of this trade, and therefore that meaſures ſhould be taken, and a time fixed, with a view to that abolition. In the mean time I would propoſe a ſyſtem of encreaſing duties upon the Slaves carried to the Weſt Indies, while the Planters would be preparing themſelves againſt the entire ſtoppage of the trade, by putting themſelves in a ſtate to be inſured of the maintenance of the population.

" It can be the wiſh of no one that an emancipation of the kind which has taken place in St. Domingo, ſhould be the conſequence of any determination of this Houſe; but what I would recommend ſeriouſly to your conſideration is, that the Negroes ſhould firſt be held in a ſtate of villeinage, and that they ſhould riſe by degrees until they are ultimately free. From all the experience which I have had, I do not think that the colonial eſtabliſhments of this country will endeavour to forward ſuch a regulation,

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and I have no hope that in many of the iſlands the laws there in force will be ſufficient, and therefore it may be neceſſary for Parliament to name a period for the termination of the trade, to which the Planters muſt look.

" That this Bill ought not to paſs I have no doubt, unleſs it ſhould undergo ſome alteration. And here I would wiſh to advert to what fell from one of the honourable members for Liverpool (Mr. Roscoe), reſpecting giving the Slave Dealers notice, in order that maſſacres might not take place on the coaſt. If that be admitted, I confeſs I do not exactly ſee how it is poſſible that that notice ſhould be given in a period of nine months, for nobody will go to the Coaſt of Africa, it cannot be expected, for the purpoſe only of giving an intimation of the paſſing of this bill.

" If this meaſure ſhould appear to be running a moſt extenſive riſk of deſtroying a great part of our Weſt India property, I am ſure that the Houſe will heſitate before it votes in favour of it. It is obvious that there muſt be ſome means of maintaining the population, otherwiſe the unavoidable conſequence will be the loſs of the revenue derived from our iſlands. Perhaps it may be neceſſary to have not only the improvements ſuggeſted by the noble Lord, but to have thoſe improvements ſupported and aſſiſted by colonial regulations; for if the population be diſproportioned to what is neceſſary to cultivate the eſtates, there is no law that can paſs here, no regulation that can be made, which, without the countenance and aſſiſtance of the laws of the iſland, can be attended with ultimate abolition; and if you attempt to raiſe a population without providing the rational means of ſo doing, that attempt muſt be fatal. The intereſt of the Planter may be fully conſulted with reſpect to this meaſure, if you fix a future and ſomewhat diſtant period for the diſcontinuance of the traffic, for by that time he will know what he has to expect. I think that this is a moſt proper juncture to calculate on the probabilities of ſucceſs or diſappointment in the effects of this bill; and in the committee I ſhall take an opportunity of moving for the enlargement of the time. I am perfectly aware that fixing a period beyond which this trade ſhall not proceed, is not effecting a

gradual abolition, but it is making the Houſe pledge itſelf that, at a certain time, the trade ſhall be compleatly aboliſhed. But the chief object I have in view is to have duties allowed on the Slaves or the ſhips, which muſt in a courſe of years put a total end to the trade.

" For theſe reaſons I have no wiſh to oppoſe the bill, but only in the committee I ſhall take the liberty to make the motion to which I alluded.

Sir JOHN DOYLE.—" Sir, my object in ſoliciting your attention this evening, is to give myſelf an opportunity of replying to the arguments of the counſel heard at your bar, with whoſe opinions the honourable member for Liverpool, behind me (General GASCOIGNE) has ſo compleatly coincided; and I truſt, that if I do not bring forward topics which are new with regard to this queſtion, I ſhall, at leaſt, endeavour to be ſhort; but I am confident that in addreſſing a Britiſh audience on the ſubject of juſtice and humanity, to entreat their attention would be to inſult them.

" Some honourable Gentlemen have this night ſhewn themſelves to be the friends of and advocates for a gradual abolition, and the reaſon they aſſign for that opinion is, that there exiſts in the iſlands a diſproportion of males and females, and therefore, that unleſs that defect be corrected, the population cannot be maintained; but, Sir, I will aſk the Houſe, if this can be corrected by importation? Becauſe we all know that the chief trade is in males, and that, therefore, the evil inſtead of diminiſhing, will be increaſing, and therefore, it appears to me, that nothing can be drawn from that argument.

" The object of the counſel at the bar was to ſupport and continue the Slave Trade, and they reſted their claims upon the grounds of juſtice and humanity. They too, on behalf of the Planters, implored the juſtice and humanity of Parliament, but not for the oppreſſed, not for the ſufferer, not for him who bore the cruel chains of Slavery, but for him who was the author of that oppreſſion, was the cauſe of that ſuffering, and the impoſer of that Slavery; on the part of thoſe who inflicted the torture, not on behalf of thoſe who were the unhappy victims of it.

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" In the outſet of what I have to addreſs to the Houſe, I do take upon myſelf moſt poſitively to deny, that, that can be found policy which reſts upon injuſtice: on that point, I entertain not the ſmalleſt difficulty—But even ſuppoſing I did entertain any doubt on the ſubject of the policy of the trade, that would be entirely removed when I reflected, that two of the greateſt men that the world ever produced, who had differed almoſt upon every queſtion but this, yet upon this point compleatly coincided: they both agreed upon the queſtion of the impolicy of the Slave Trade. But, Sir, let their opinions have been what they might, let their ſentiments have been directly contrary to mine, yet for myſelf, I will at leaſt ſay this, that the opinion of no man upon earth, be my reſpect for him as great as poſſible, can make me decide contrary to the dictates of my conſcience.

" It might not, perhaps, be conſidered quite decorous, to draw any compariſon between the late adminiſtration and the preſent; it might not be delicate to contraſt the talents of one ſet of men with thoſe of another; but whatever may be their abilities we muſt always be aware that they have a great reſponſibility caſt upon them, and that they have a moſt important duty to diſcharge to the country; and I have no doubt but they have given the preſent ſubject every poſſible attention, and under ſuch circumſtances the meaſure comes before the Houſe with peculiar advantage.

" But, Sir, there is another ground ſtill ſtronger than any I have yet mentioned, and I hope, in what I ſhall offer to the Houſe, I ſhall not be ſuppoſed to hint at any thing which may have influenced the votes of any gentleman upon this queſtion. There is one reaſon, however, why I wiſh miniſters to be on my ſide reſpecting the ſubject under diſcuſſion, and that is, that they on this queſtion are entirely impartial and diſpaſſionate. The reverſe is, however, the fact, as to the gentlemen who oppoſe us, and maintain on oppoſite opinion, for they have a certain intereſt at ſtake, and we muſt all know, that where private intereſt interferes with public opinion, a certain bias will naturally be given to the mind, which too often controuls the judgment.

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" An argument upon which conſiderable ſtreſs was laid by the learned counſel at your bar, when thoroughly inveſtigated, comes to nothing. They told you that our anceſtors for centuries had countenanced this trade; that they had ſanctioned it, not only with their eyes open to the conſequences, but after the moſt mature inveſtigation they could beſtow upon it, and is it now ſaid that it is to be abandoned, will you pay that diſreſpect to their judgments as to give up that without conſideration which they promoted? That, Sir, is the argument, and though I greatly reverence our anceſtors, and their deciſions, yet I ſee no reaſon why we ſhould conſider them more enlightened than the preſent generation. On the contrary, we have the advantage over them conſiderably, for we muſt recollect, that experience, in a queſtion of this nature, is a principal requiſite, and we have not only the experience of our forefathers, but our own too. Beſides this, Sir, we have lived in a period much more eventful than all our anceſtors put together ever ſaw.

" The learned counſel likewiſe adverted to the ſtate of St. Domingo, as applying to the preſent caſe, and perhaps I might be inclined to admit that that iſland is not a very comfortable neighbour to our Colonies. In their preſent ſituation, it muſt be allowed, that it was very natural for them to ſend ſpies to Jamaica, but whether that was done by the inſtigation of the French or of the Black government I do not know, but to Jamaica they went, and then came back again.

" Sir, Gentlemen have made uſe of many arguments in oppoſition to this bill, but in the contrary ſcale I ſhall beg leave to place my own perſonal knowledge, as I am confident from experience, that the abolition will have a beneficial effect on all parties, and I am certain that if the meaſure were carried into operation, our poſſeſſions in the Weſt Indies would be leſs likely to be diſturbed by diſſenſion or open rebellion, than they are at preſent; and this opinion I have formed upon minute inveſtigation, remembering too, at the ſame time, that DESSALINES was an imported African.

" Now, Sir, there is one argument very extraordinary in itſelf, which has been made uſe of, and inſiſted upon on more

more occaſions than this; I mean, that the condition of the Continent of Africa is much improved, that its ſituation is conſiderably benefited by the Slave Trade. Now, Sir, I have always conſidered it a preſumptuous thing for one man to judge of the happineſs of another, but if he attempts to do ſo, he muſt place himſelf in the ſituation of the perſon upon whoſe joys and ſorrows he is paſſing ſentence. I have ſeen this preſumption carried to ſuch an extent that I have actually witneſſed a poacher at a rabbit warren, in the act of ſewing up the mouth of his ferret. I remonſtrated with him, but the man replied, with the gravest countenance, 'Sir,' ſaid he, 'you are greatly miſtaken, the ferret likes it of all things—don't you ſee how it cocks its noſe with pleaſure? It is really highly delighted.' I mention this, Sir, only to ſhew the length to which you may go, if you attempt to force happineſs on others.

"But, Sir, I am particularly glad that the honourable member for Liverpool happens to be in the Houſe to hear me, as I beg leave to obſerve, that what I am about to ſay forms a ſtrong part of my caſe. It was obſerved, Sir, by the counſel at the bar, and by my honourable friend (General Gascoigne) that Liverpool would be conſiderably injured if the abolition were to take place. It was ſtated that there was a number of ſhips built only for the African trade belonging to that port, which were adapted ſolely to the purpoſe for which they were built, and it was added, that there were alſo ſeamen, calculated ſolely for the navigation of thoſe Slave ſhips. We were likewiſe told that their harbours and docks could be applied to nothing but the reception of Slave ſhips, never having been employed in any other way. Juſt let me ſee for a moment to what an extent that argument would carry us. I will ſuppoſe the caſe of a highwayman who ſhould have ſtopped ſome gentleman on the road, and robbed him; and being afterwards taken and called on to account for his conduct, he ſhould have ſtated, 'It is true I did rob him, and got the man's money, but you cannot blame me, for I know that if I had not committed the robbery, Will Bagſhot, who was further on the road, would. Sir, I am ſo accuſtomed to the trade, I underſtand ſo much about

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that ſort of thing, that I ſhould feel myſelf very aukward at any thing elſe. Beſides, I have gone to a great expence, I have laid out a great deal of money in it, and have bought four or five horſes which are good for nothing but to ſtop gentlemen on the road. I have not only done this, but I have built ſtables for thoſe horſes, which can be applied to nothing but to hold highwaymen's horſes, and my piſtols are only made to ſtop gentlemen on the highway.' Such, Sir, might be the excuſe of this depredator. But, Sir, let me not be guilty of injuſtice while pleading againſt it. I have myſelf been as uncourteouſly treated by highwaymen as any gentleman in the houſe, yet I ſhould be ſorry to degrade their profeſſion, by drawing any compariſon between them and Slave Dealers. (A general laugh.)

" This meaſure, Sir, which goes to the abolition of the Slave Trade, is a great and meritorious undertaking, and let the promoters of it be calumniated ever ſo much, I cannot help expreſſing my reſpect for thoſe generous men who thus undertake to reſtore that happineſs to the black ſons of miſery, of which they have been ſo long deprived.

" I now come, Sir, to a very ſerious part of my ſubject, for though I am always delighted if any thing I can ſay introduces good humour and merriment; I do aſſure the Houſe, that on the preſent occaſion, I feel as acutely as any man, and I am the more induced to treat the ſubject gravely, when I know the foul ſtain that muſt continue to diſgrace the pages of Britiſh Hiſtory, if we permit this abominable traffic to be longer carried on. Yes, Sir, the ſubject is indeed moſt ſerious and grave, and it needs no argument to prove it to be ſo.

" Sir, from the firſt day I read of, but ſtill more ſince I have ſeen the effects of the Slave Trade, it has not been a ſubject of merriment to me, but it has made the deepeſt impreſſion on my heart; and it is only becauſe I have ſeen the effects of it, that I venture to treſpaſs on the time of the Houſe. The learned Counſel, and the honourable Member were extremely anxious to bring before the Houſe, evidence from a Governor of the iſland of Jamaica. I am, Sir, fully acquainted with the characters

racters of the witneſſes who were to have been adduced; and one of them, the late Governor, is my intimate friend, for whom I have the ſtrongeſt attachment, but I totally deny that they are competent witneſſes, on the preſent occaſion; on the contrary, it appears to my mind, that the higher you go in rank, as to the witneſſes, the lower do you deſcend with regard to the value of the teſtimony you obtain from them; for I think that of all the people on the Iſland, the Governor of it is he who is leaſt likely to be able to give you a correct ſtatement of the condition of the Slaves.

" What, Sir, is the reaſon of this inability? It is, that he ſees and converſes with Gentlemen who are deeply intereſted in the queſtion. They conſtantly ſurround him, and his converſation is entirely with them. Then, Sir, if ever he makes a viſit to a plantation, the time at which he arrives is always a kind of gala day; and the faces of both whites and blacks wear a ſmile of gaiety. Theſe Gentlemen, the Governors, therefore, are the worſt witneſſes to prove the good treatment which the Negroes receive.

" I was once on a plantation myſelf for ſome days, and had I left it on the evening of the ninth day, I ſhould have given the ſame teſtimony as that which would be given by the Governors; but however, I did not go till the next day, and remaining there the tenth, decided my opinion upon the queſtion. It happened, that on that day as I was out with a party of ſoldiers, I was ſtartled by hearing the groans of a perſon apparently in the greateſt diſtreſs. We came to a ſmall cloſe miſerable hut, the doors and windows of which were faſtened. The lamentations ſtill continued, one groan was repeated after another, and to diſcover the cauſe of them, we broke open the door of the hovel, and there we found, to our horror, a human being, ironed and ſtretched upon the ground, where for four days he had remained without being able to change his poſition. The circumſtances may be better conceived than I can deſcribe them, when I tell the Houſe, that ſo miſerable was the condition of this unhappy man, that the rats had actually eaten off the greater part of both his ears. Sur-

gical aſſiſtance was obtained, and I am certain, that if the Negro had remained, in the ſituation in which he was found, for the reſt of the day, he would have been completely dead. Whether he recovered or no, I am not fully informed; this occurrence, however, not only raiſed my indignation, but compelled me to make enquiry in many more particulars reſpecting the treatment which the Slaves received. (Hear! hear!)

" There is, Sir, another circumſtance, which I wiſh to mention, and I aſſure the Houſe, that I do not do it to excite its feelings, but merely to eſtabliſh and ſupport my argument. This caſe happened immediately afterwards in another plantation, the proprietors of both of them however were females, and if compaſſion had no place in the heart of a woman in the Weſt Indies, can you expect it to be an inhabitant of the breaſts of the coarſer ſex?

" The caſe was this: a Negro, a young man, who had run away from his work, and deſerted, came to the camp which was at a ſmall diſtance. The following day, the miſtreſs of the Negro came, and addreſſing herſelf to the commanding officer, demanded her Slave. That officer ſpoke to both of them ſeparately, and found, that the Black was willing to return, if it were not for the fear of puniſhment. Upon this, it was agreed to reſtore the Slave, on condition, that his miſtreſs forgave him what had paſſed. The woman promiſed to do ſo, but in about three weeks afterwards, this ſame Negro found his way back to the camp, and his appearance was really like nothing but a walking ſkeleton. His hands were faſtened behind him, and he was almoſt eaten through with inſects; for notwithſtanding the promiſe, we found that this infernal woman, had cauſed him to be ironed, and attached to a tree, where he had remained ſeven days and nights without food, until he was ſuch a ſpectacle, that it was impoſſible to behold him without horror.

" Sir, it did ſo happen, that a ſhort time afterwards a neighbouring Planter came into the camp, and I never in all my life ſhall forget the tone and manner in which he made his complaint. He ſaid, how ſpiteful his neighbours were. " Only think, they have killed two of

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my Negroes, and I ſhould not have thought ſo much about it, if they had not been two of my very beſt Negroes." By the law of the iſland, a perſon whoſe Negro had been killed, might proſecute the offender, and recover a penalty, but this planter told us, that he would not be ſo ungentlemanlike as to ſue for the fine, but that he would take an opportunity to ſhoot a Negro or two belonging to the perſon who had killed his, to balance the account.

" Such, Sir, being the degraded ſtate of the Negro population in our Colonies, it calls moſt loudly for the interpoſition of the Houſe, and if the meaſure has but the effect of compelling the planter to regard the comforts of his Slave, a highly important object will be attained, by the promoters of this bill."

Sir Samuel Romilly.—" A queſtion I think of more importance than the preſent, never came before this Houſe as a deliberative aſſembly, or one which required more conſideration; and I am ſo anxious that the bill ſhould not only paſs, but paſs by a great majority, that it was with extreme concern I heard the Right Honourable Gentleman, who ſpoke laſt but one, make the obſervations which he did upon this queſtion. To me it is quite evident, that the only dangers which can attend the adoption of the meaſure are thoſe ſtated in the conſiderations addreſſed to you by that Honourable Gentleman. It is not for us on an occaſion like the preſent, to liſten to the claims of the Liverpool Merchants and Planters, who, from motives of private intereſt, ſhut their ears againſt the cries of humanity and juſtice. Our attention may more properly be directed, to hear the objections of thoſe perſons, who think that the moſt effectual way to aſſiſt the African, is not by at once aboliſhing the trade, which has been increaſing to ſuch an enormous magnitude, but by poſtponing it to a diſtant day. We may ſtill, however, according to their opinion, determine if the traffic ſhould, or ſhould not longer exiſt, but we ſhould fix a future period, beyond which it ſhould not be carried on.

" If, Sir, any Gentleman has duly weighed the ſituation of the Negroes in the Weſt Indies, he muſt be aware

from experience, that to improve their condition, we muſt enact this law. To do it by regulation we have found impoſſible; for the Aſſembly of Jamaica has told us plainly, that every thing required to accompliſh that end has been already effected. It is my decided opinion, that by regulations it is quite impoſſible to effect any beneficial end, and the only mode remaining, is by aboliſhing the trade itſelf; by which means, we ſhall effectually put a ſtop to the practice of bringing freſh ſlaves into the Iſlands, to ſupply the place of others whom ſevere treatment has deprived of exiſtence; the hiſtory of whoſe lives would be ſuch a tale of horror, that we could not liſten to it without ſhuddering.

"A Gentleman, Sir, who has ſpoken during this night's debate, imagines, that unleſs the abolition of this traffic be fixed for a diſtant period, the dreadful conſequence will be, that numerous bands of Negroes will be brought from the interior of Africa to the Coaſt, and no market being found for them, they will be all ineviatably maſſacred. That honourable Member, Sir, ſaid much of the *aſſertions* of a noble Lord; but, Sir, I ſhould be glad to know, where is the evidence to ſupport this bold propoſition? There is not a witneſs who has been examined, or whoſe teſtimony is before the Houſe, who ſpeaks of theſe maſſacres, as they are termed, in any way which is deſerving of credit. Not only have we no ſubſtantial evidence of that fact, but we are furniſhed with teſtimony eſtabliſhing the direct contrary. We have a witneſs, who has viſited the interior of that vaſt continent, Mr. Park, and he has declared, not merely that theſe maſſacres do not take place, but that the ſole conſequence of the ſtoppage of the market is, that the Negroes are employed in their own country; certainly in a ſtate of ſlavery, but contraſted with the heavy bondage they ſupport in the Weſt Indies, it is perfect freedom.

"There is one ſubject, Sir, on which there has been conſiderable contradiction, both in the evidence, and in the arguments; I mean, reſpecting the manner in which the Slaves are obtained in Africa, to be tranſported to the Weſt Indies; and it has been ſworn, that they were all of them either priſoners taken in war, or criminals condemned

demned to ſlavery as a puniſhment for their offences. If ſuch were really the caſe, ſingle individuals, in moſt caſes, would be the ſubjects of this trade; but on the contrary, do we not conſtantly ſee, not only one or two out of a particular circle, but whole families, huſbands, wives, and children, ſwept away from their native country. It is plain, therefore, I think, that the allegation of their being captives or offenders, is a mere pretence, a mere contrivance, under colour of which they procure the unhappy perſons who are the objects of the trade.

"Satisfactory as this reaſoning may be, it is not all. Sir William Young's Common Place Book, furniſhes abundant evidence, that ſuch is the fact. In the year 1797 we find, that no leſs than 34,984 human creatures were conſigned to never-ceaſing bondage. When his Majeſty's arms conquered the privince of Demarara, there was a demand for 23,000 additional Negroes, and they were furniſhed without heſitation or difficulty, and afterwards, the number of 57,000 was as quickly found as the 34,000 had been before. Can it be ſuppoſed, can it be imagined for an inſtant, with this evidence before us, that juſt at the moment when theſe increaſed ſupplies were wanted, the continent of Africa became ſo ſuddenly depraved, that the crimes committed by its inhabitants became ſo numerous, as to provide for theſe new demands without difficulty? No, Sir, theſe ſuggeſtions of maſſacres and bloodſhed, are fallacious, they are mere pretences, mere coverings, to conceal the deformed countenance of cruelty, and it muſt be admitted, that they are not criminals, but innocent unoffending beings, who become the victims of Slavery, to ſatisfy the unreaſonable demands of Britiſh avarice.

"Let it not, however, reſt here. We will examine further, leſt even we ſhould be yet miſtaken. We are told, that in a ſubſequent year, the demand for Negroes was to the number of 55,628, and that in the following, it decreaſed as low as to 34,000, and yet, though the trade in this latter inſtance was ſo greatly diminiſhed, did we hear of any maſſacre of thoſe ſuperfluous numbers on the coaſt of Africa? No ſuch thing, Sir, an event of that nature never occurred, and therefore notwithſtanding all that

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has been urged on this ſubject, the Houſe muſt conclude, that there is not the ſlighteſt foundation for theſe ſuppoſed dangers, for we all know, that let the quantity neceſſary be what it may, there is always provided for the market, a ſufficient ſupply of Negroes to ſatisfy every demand. We cannot doubt, Sir, under ſuch circumſtances, that if it were required that an extraordinary number of females ſhould be ſupplied, that ſex only would be guilty of crimes; if an additional demand were made for children, the ſame would be the caſe; children alone would be condemned to bondage, as an atonement for their offences.

"But ſome of my right honourable friends think, that if the Bill paſſes into a law, there will be great danger of an inſurrection among the blacks in the Weſt Indies; and one Gentleman thought, that that danger could not in any other way be avoided, than by fixing a time, when the Slave Trade ſhould ceaſe, which would put an end to all fear of diſcontent among the blacks or the whites. Has not this been already done? Has not a trial been made, and was not the time fixed for the termination of the trade, the year 1796? Since then, Sir, changes have taken place, and counſel are brought to your bar, to tell the Houſe, that the Iſlands in the Weſt Indies are incapable of keeping up their population; and the reaſon they aſſign for it is, becauſe the diſproportion of the ſexes is five to one. Thus, Sir, does it appear, that notwithſtanding all this notice, notwithſtanding they have been allowed all this time to increaſe the number of females, the diſproportion is ſtill to the extent they mention; therefore it is obvious, that there is but one way of proceeding, there is only one method to make the Planters attend to the comforts of the Slave, and that is by abolition.

"With regard to the laws of the iſland, we are told by General Prevoſt in his letter, that they are merely conſidered in the Weſt Indies, as a political meaſure, and we muſt be aware from all the evidence we can obtain, that all the African can have to depend upon, is the mercy and ſympathy of his maſter; for no regulations we can make will be put in force in the iſlands, and we have the authority of the Chief Juſtice of the iſland of St. Vincent's to ſay, that it would be abſolutely impoſſible to execute

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any laws upon the Planters; and his evidence is the leſs doubtful upon this point, becauſe he was an enemy to the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

" There is a caſe, Sir, mentioned in the Report of the Privy Council, farther particulars of which I have learned from a Gentleman who was preſent in the iſland at the time, on whoſe honor I can rely, from which the Houſe will determine, whether any laws for the benefit of the Slaves can be put in execution againſt the Planters.

" A merchant reſident at Baſſeterre, in the iſland of St. Kitt's, of the name of Herbert was the maſter of two Slaves, a girl and a boy, of ſeven or eight years old, whom he was in the conſtant habit of beating with the utmoſt cruelty. The neighbours were diſturbed by the cries of the children, and one day entered his dwelling, where they found the Slaves in a moſt miſerable ſtate; for their maſter had not only beat them with the moſt mercileſs ſeverity, but in order in ſome meaſure to ſtifle their cries, had contrived to put a gag into their mouths, ſo as to make them ſuffer the moſt excruciating torments; and this gag was forced into their mouths with ſo much violence, that the cheeks of the children were actually torn by it. The Slaves were carried before a magiſtrate, who, though convinced of the cruelty of Herbert, was at a loſs how to puniſh him, as it was not known, that a maſter had ever been called to an account, or could be called to an account, for any injury to his Slave, ſhort of death or mutilation. A warrant was however granted for the apprehenſion of Herbert, and the children were committed to the care of the Deputy Provoſt Marſhal. The caſe was brought to trial before a ſpecial jury, and the facts as now ſtated appeared clearly in evidence. The jury, however, after long deliberation, brought in a verdict 'Guilty, ſubject to the opinion of the Court, if immoderate correctionof a Slave by the Maſter is a crime indictable.' The judgment of the Court was in the affirmative, and a fine of 40s. currency was decreed againſt the maſter! It happened in the mean time that the caſe had excited general intereſt throughout the iſland. The circumſtance of Herbert's having his Slaves taken away from him, became a ſubject of general converſation,

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and his cauſe was eſpouſed by almoſt all the lower claſs of whites in the iſland, and by many perſons of conſideration and opulence. He even brought an action againſt the Deputy Provoſt Marſhal, to recover damages to the amount of £300. for taking from him his Negroes. There is, Sir, a law of the iſland which declares, that no action ſhall be brought againſt a miniſterial officer, acting under the directions of the magiſtrate, unleſs they are both joined in the action; and this requiſition not having been complied with, the judge who tried the cauſe, was of opinion, that the action could not be maintained, and therefore directed, that a nonſuit ſhould be entered. But the plaintiff inſiſted that he would have a verdict, and the judge repeated to the jury the law upon the ſubject. It was, however, perfectly uſeleſs. The jury, though a ſpecial one, remained locked up for *forty-eight* hours. At laſt, the foreman repreſented that it was impoſſible for them to make up their minds, being equally divided in opinion; and in the iſſue, a juror was withdrawn. Herbert brought his action again to trial before a ſpecial jury, which, notwithſtanding the expreſs words of the act, and a clear direction from the Bench to find for the defendant, brought in a verdict for the plaintiff, though with only nominal damages.

"Now, Sir, let me aſk, What would have been the effect of ſuch barbarity as this man was guilty of in this country? Here, Sir, the public deteſtation would not have waited for the tardy execution of the law; the maſter would have been likely to fall a victim to his own cruelty. But in that iſland, the indignation raiſed was not againſt the oppreſſor, but againſt the proſecutor and the judge who tried the caſe. What muſt that ſyſtem of Slavery be which can thus reverſe all the ordinary feelings of Engliſhmen, making Herbert popular in the Weſt Indies, though convicted of crimes which here would have made it difficult to ſave him from the vengeance of the mob? And what hope can there be of protecting Slaves by law againſt ordinary acts of oppreſſion, when ſuch is the popular feeling even in extreme caſes?

"A ſecond indictment had been preferred againſt Herbert, but that was obliged to be abandoned, ſo great was the popular feeling in favour of this mercileſs maſter.

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The poor children were alſo ultimately reſtored to him; ſo that he might again exerciſe his cruelty on them with impunity.

" I know, Sir, that the facts which I ſtate are accurate, as I learnt them from an intimate friend, a Gentleman who was counſel in the cauſe.

" I heard of a ſimilar inſtance from a perſon reſident in Barbadoes, at the time when Lord Seaforth brought in a bill to make the murder of a Slave felony. Though a man of great humanity, he was termed a Draco, who was come to write the laws for the protection of the Negroes in the blood of the whites.—Such, Sir, is the treatment of thoſe who endeavour to benefit the unhappy ſubjects of Weſt-Indian Slavery; and we know from experience, that the laws of the iſlands do not even treat the Negroes as human beings. Thoſe laws declare, that the teſtimony of a Black man, even though he be not a Slave, or the evidence of a Mulatto, cannot be received againſt an European, and yet a Slave may be admitted as a witneſs againſt a free Negro. Such are the cruel and unjuſt diſtinctions which our colonial inſtitutions have created between the blacks and the whites. The law puniſhes even the ſtriking a white man, though he be not the maſter of the Slave but a menial ſervant, with the greateſt poſſible ſeverity, and moſt generally with death. And this law, as I ſaid before, applies not only to the maſters of Slaves, but to their white dependants. Nay, if an European attempts even to kill a Negro, and that Negro ſhould ſtrike the perſon attacking him in order to defend himſelf, it is puniſhable in ſome caſes with death, and in all caſes with at leaſt the loſs of limb.

" The laws of the Colonies are ſaid to be humane, but by thoſe laws a child of 5 or 6 years old, may receive for a ſlight offence, or for no offence, at the caprice of the maſter or overſeer, no leſs than 39 laſhes with what is termed a cart whip. To this dreadful extent the law *authoriſes* the infliction of puniſhment by individuals. But even in caſes where the law conveys no authority, where wanton cruelty is inflicted in defiance of the law, how eaſy muſt it be to eſcape detection, when the teſtimony of a Negro or a thouſand Negroes would not avail againſt a

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white man. And with what force muſt this argument ſtrike when we reflect on the proportion the white bear to the black inhabitants of the iſlands, and which, at the leaſt, is about 10 Negroes to one European. What ſecurity could we expect in our paſſage even through the ſtreets of London, if 99 people out of an hundred or even 9 out of 10 were incompetent to give evidence in a court of juſtice.

" But, Sir, an act was paſſed in the iſland of Dominica, in December, 1788, which was pretended to be made for the protection of the wives of Negro Slaves. Perhaps, Sir, this act may be brought forward as an argument againſt what I have advanced, and as diſproving the general oppreſſion of the blacks. But if any one will take the trouble to inveſtigate the ſubject, he will find that this apparently moſt humane proviſion is a mere mockery of legiſlation, plainly intended to delude the people in this country. From the papers on the table they will learn, that there are no marriages among the Africans in the Weſt Indies; that no religious ceremony of that nature is attended to; and that therefore the female Slaves are not conſidered in the eye of the law as wives; ſo that it is abſolutely impoſſible that any one ſhould be convicted for an offence committed againſt this act. When we think then on the laws of the iſlands, and when we reflect that theſe unhappy beings are made to work like beaſts of burthen urged on by an inhuman driver with a cart whip, I would aſk, Whether it can be ſtated, that the ſituation of the Slaves in our iſlands is the happieſt in the world? No, Sir, they are not only the moſt unhappy of all Slaves, but they are the moſt wretched of created beings. Far better would it be for them to be conſidered merely as brute animals, rather than to be treated as reaſonable men, only for the purpoſe of attaching to them, for all the actions which they perform, a dreadful reſponſibility. In one act paſſed by the government of Barbadoes, they are deemed and called *Britiſh Slaves*, and are declared not worthy of the ordinary tribunals; and yet when found guilty of the enormous crime of deſtroying any thing of the value of *4d.* they are ſubjected to the heavieſt puniſhment. From all theſe circumſtances we may collect, that the only remedy for thoſe oppreſſions is the total

total deſtruction of the Slave Trade, which, by exciting a fear in the minds of the Planters left the Slaves they now poſſeſs ſhould be reduced in number, will induce them to give to their Slaves the comforts of life, to permit them to marry and have families, and to ameliorate the ſyſtem under which they are placed.

"There is one ſet of complainants, however, who think it neceſſary to draw the particular attention of the Houſe to their demands of compenſation, I allude to the owners of land in the iſland of Trinidad; and ſuch they contend is the nature of their claims, that until they are ſatisfied, there muſt be a ſtop put to this great and beneficent act of the Legiſlature. That iſland was conquered in the month of February, 1797, and at that time there were 10,009 Slaves upon it. From Sir WILLIAM YOUNG's Common Place Book it appears, that there have been imported ſince that time, 4500 Negroes annually, which in the courſe of nine years, amounts to 40,500. This, Sir, was wholly from the Coaſt of Africa; but there were importations from the other Iſlands, which amounted to not leſs than 1000 Slaves yearly, which would make the number imported in that time about 50,000, and the whole number which ought to have remained in the Iſland, ſuppoſing no decreaſe to have taken place, about 60,000. But what is the fact. The total number of Slaves on that Iſland, according to the ſame reſpectable authority, Sir WILLIAM YOUNG, in the laſt year, was only 19,500, leaving the enormous deficit of upwards of 40,000 Slaves in nine years. Theſe miſerable creatures, let it be remembered, were not ſubjected to any peſtilential diſeaſe. No, they were employed in the cultivation of new lands, and it is to continue this murderous cultivation, this dreadful and unparalleled waſte of human life, that the Planters of Trinidad require you to ſuſpend your preſent proceedings.

"We were told, Sir, that the paſſage from Africa on board the Slave ſhips was happy, and that when the Negroes arrived in the Weſt Indies, their ſituation was ſtill happier. We have not, Sir, taken this wholly upon truſt, but we have had the courage to ſearch into the fact, and we have found, that all the crimes, all the iniquities

which have been attributed to this trade, are founded in truth. And after we have torn away the ſhroud which before concealed this dreadful monſter from our view, after we have gazed upon its corruption, ſhall we ſtill cling to it, ſhall we ſtill increaſe the guilt of which we are now ſenſible; ſhall we ſtill continue thoſe practices which we know to be at war with every dictate of juſtice and humanity? No, Sir, let us no longer be the objects of ſuch a reproach. Let us reflect, that at the moment this diſcuſſion is going forward, the ſevereſt ſufferings are endured in Africa; let us conſider the number of ſhips now ſailing from its Coaſt, and the miſeries entailed upon the wretches they are conveying to our Colonies. I hope that the time is not very diſtant, when the horrors we now witneſs will be endured no longer, and when our poſterity ſhall have to compare theſe traditionary crimes, with the happier ſtate of ſociety before them; when they ſhall behold ſcience penetrating into the yet dark and uncultivated deſerts of Africa; when commerce ſhall be co-operating to ſoften the manners of its yet barbarous inhabitants, and when the Weſt Indies ſhall no more be cultivated, as now, by wretched ſlaves, but by happy and contented labourers; by perſons who are permitted to enjoy the benefits of thoſe laws, and that government under which they live. And will it not be a conſolation to thoſe who are to follow us, to think, that their fore-fathers were thoſe who firſt put an end to this abominable trade? Many honourable Members of this Houſe may yet live to witneſs all theſe benefits, and to them is re-ſerved, perhaps, the greateſt happineſs which, in this ſtate of exiſtence, we are permitted to enjoy. What a delight-ful reflection is it to think, that generations yet unborn will bleſs our memories as the authors of their liberty and happineſs.

"But, Sir, if ſuch will be the feelings of thoſe who have borne any part in this tranſaction, or who have even wit-neſſed its completion, what then muſt be the feelings of my Honourable Friend? What is there in the wide range of human ambition, which could afford pleaſure ſo pure, gratification ſo exalted, as he muſt enjoy? When I look to the man who has placed on his brow the imperial dia-

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dem of France, ſurrounded with all the pomp of power and all the pride of victory, dethroning and creating monarchs at his will, diſtributing kingdoms to his family, and principalities to his favourites, ſeeming, when he ſits upon his throne, with his proſtrate kings and princes paying him their ſervile homage, to have reached the ſummit of human ambition, and the pinnacle of earthly happineſs;—and when I ſurvey the inmoſt receſſes of that man's mind; when I follow him into his cloſet or to his bed, and conſider the pangs with which his ſolitude muſt be tormented and his repoſe diſturbed, as he recollects the blood he has ſhed, the devaſtation and miſery he has occaſioned, and the amount of human happineſs he has deſtroyed:—and when turning from this diſguſting ſpectacle, I compare with his pangs of remorſe the feelings which muſt accompany my Honourable Friend from this Houſe to his own, after the vote of this night ſhall have accompliſhed the object of his humane and unceaſing labours; the feelings I ſay, which muſt ſwell the boſom of my honoured Friend, when retiring from this roof to the domeſtic circle of his happy family, he repoſes his head upon his pillow, and reflects on the prayers which will be offered up to heaven for his protection; I muſt regard him as an object of juſt envy to the moſt ambitious of mortals. Who will not be proud to concur with him in promoting the greateſt act of national benefit, and ſecuring to the Africans the greateſt bleſſing, which God has ever put it in the power of man to confer on his fellow creatures?"

Mr. Hibbert.—"I riſe very reluctantly, Sir, to treſpaſs upon the Houſe at this late hour, and immediately after a ſpeech as impreſſively eloquent perhaps as any that was ever delivered within theſe walls; but connected as I am, and have long been, with the commerce of the Weſt Indies, it may be expected that I ſhould not let it paſs with merely a ſilent vote. I am aware that, in declaring my connexion with the Weſt India Trade, I ſubject myſelf directly to the charge of a bias of intereſt, which we have recently been told has clouded the underſtandings and blunted the feelings of that claſs of perſons. Sir, there are others in this Houſe who can better judge than

than I can, whether my underſtanding and my feelings have, in fact, been ſo perverted; and yet, Sir, I muſt ſay, that after more than twenty-five years extenſive connection with Jamaica, during the greater part of which period this queſtion has agitated the public and the legiſlature, I have given to it my utmoſt attention—and am ſtill but the more and more confirmed in oppoſition to the object of the Bill now before us. I cannot, however, but think it hard, Sir, that Weſt India Proprietors and Merchants, perſons not deſtitute of talents and education, and certainly having the means of being well informed on this ſubject, are yet in a manner baniſhed from the court, while their intereſts and their properties are litigated: they are not allowed to be either judge, jury, witneſs, or party; for they are told that they quite miſtake their own intereſts, and that others know much better than they do what is good for them. But ſurely, Sir, they ſhould either be liſtened to as diſintereſted evidence, or their partial intereſt ſhould be admitted as proof of the riſk which their property is incurring; and the public ought to be aware of the extent of the ſacrifice which it may be called upon to make.

" Whatever conceſſions may have been made by thoſe who have preceded me in the debate, I cannot, Sir, grant at the outſet, that this Bill is unqueſtionably grounded upon humanity and juſtice, and then debate it as a matter of expediency and policy. There can be no diſpute about the obligation of those great principles—it is eternal and immutable as is their nature; and if you admit that the preſent meaſure is their neceſſary dictate, the diſpute is at an end. I cannot ſtand here, and in oppoſition to them, calculate the advantage of an increaſed production of ſugar and coffee: but if I had been told, not of this meaſure now propoſed to us, but of any meaſure which although it was indiſputably enjoined by every principle of juſtice and humanity, yet in the courſe of almoſt twenty years diſcuſſion, it had not been able to make its effective progreſs through the Britiſh Parliament (recommended, at the ſame time, by the cry of the people out of doors, and by an union of the greateſt talents within), until it received the protecting hand of his Majeſty's

principal

principal miniſter in either Houſe, I ſhould ſay, ‘ it is impoſſible; there muſt be ſome miſtake in the application of theſe great principles to the meaſure;’ it is one of thoſe meaſures perhaps which, grounding itſelf upon exiſting and acknowledged abuſes, attempts to accompliſh objects beyond the reach of legiſlation, aſſumes a ſtandard of human perfection which experience does not juſtify, and puts into hazard exiſting eſtabliſhments, which, though imperfect, confer much public and much private benefit, and merely promiſes to ſubſtitute what exiſts only in viſionary theory. If ſo, the meaſure muſt be the occaſion of juſt jealouſy to a wiſe legiſlature, as approaching, in feature and character, to thoſe wild projects of reform, to which the ſpirit of modern philanthropy has given birth, and of which the civilized world has lately ſeen the terrible reſults—projects, Sir, that have univerſally proved ſubverſive of their objects, and have collaterally cauſed an immenſe maſs of miſery and deſtruction.

“ What is it, Sir, that could have reſiſted a meaſure, which had been unqueſtionably built upon thoſe great principles? Is it the oppoſition of the Weſt India body in Parliament? Alas, Sir, who ever heard of them as combined into a political phalanx, diſplaying regular front in critical moments, and giving and receiving mutual aſſiſtance and ſupport? I will not ſay whether, had they done ſo, they would have ſtood here now defenceleſs as they do. In fact, they have felt their intimate connection with all the leading intereſts of the mother country; they have looked upon the merchant, the banker, the manufacturer, the land-holder, the ſoldier, and the ſeaman in this Houſe as their repreſentatives, and they have experienced occaſionally ſupport from them all: more particularly muſt I declare, with heart-felt gratitude, that in every rank of the Britiſh Navy, the Coloniſts have found friends. In this ſenſe it may indeed be ſaid that the Weſt India intereſt has influenced the queſtion; but of ſuch influence I feel proud—it is not the influence of intrigue or of party.

“ Sir, I will now meet the queſtion fairly, and look to the application of theſe great principles of juſtice and humanity. Is it pretended, that the mere poſſeſſion, or

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uſe, or transfer of a Slave in Africa, is unjuſt or inhuman? Is it unjuſt? By all the laws and cuſtoms of Africa, exiſting from the remoteſt antiquity, it is authorized; and the abſtract rights of man cannot be profitably applied to ſocieties exiſting under eſtabliſhed laws. *What is conſiſtent with thoſe laws muſt be accounted juſt.* Is the ſame thing in Africa inhuman? Surely not. We have abundance of evidence to prove, that during famines, which are frequent in Africa, multitudes of the natives fly to Slavery as a refuge, and without it muſt inevitably periſh: and ſuppoſe them, at ſuch times, transferred from a poorer to a richer maſter—is that inhuman? I could not but ſhew an expreſſion of diſſent to-night, when an honourable Gentleman (Mr. FAWKES) ſo poſitively told us that Slavery, and the ſale of Slaves, were forbidden by the divine law. Sir, I did not look for this part of the diſcuſſion; but as it has been brought forward, I muſt ſay, that in the ſacred books I can find no ſuch authority. In the Old Teſtament, the Slave Trade, or the ſale of men, is ſpoken of juſt as other trades. The New Teſtament inculcates juſtice and humanity in every ſtation; but it interferes with no political relations whatſoever. I need not tell honourable Gentlemen that the Greek word, which in our verſion is every where tranſlated *Servant*, does really mean *Slave:* and ſince the ſubject has been ſtarted, I ſhall mention, that in the Epiſtle of Paul to Philemon, Paul ſends back Oneſimus, who was Philemon's Slave, and had run away from his maſter, to reſume his ſtation, without one word diſapproving of Slavery, or vindicating Oneſimus, who had fled from it. The honourable Gentleman cited that admirable rule—'Do unto others as ye would that they ſhould do unto you,' as deciſive on this queſtion; but how does the honourable Gentleman read that divine rule as applied to this matter? Does he maintain, that becauſe being a Britiſh labourer, I ſhould be glad that my maſter would pay me wages for doing nothing, that therefore I, being a maſter, ought ſo to treat my labourer? As applied to Slave and maſter, I underſtand that rule to inculcate no more than this—That a ſlave may reaſonably expect from his maſter protection and kindneſs, in return for diligence and fidelity; and a kind and careful maſter has the

the ſame right to expect fidelity and diligence from his Slave. Sir, it is not the Slave Trade, but the abuſes incident to that trade, to which the preamble of this bill can be properly applied. There can be no queſtion concerning the injuſtice, inhumanity, and impolicy of theſe abuſes; but the preamble of the bill as it ſtands is, ſtrictly ſpeaking, untrue, and is liable alſo to many other objections.

" The authorities of the many eminent men who have oppoſed this trade in Parliament, have been brought forward; and the noble Lord (Howick) has appealed with triumph to the united ſentiments of Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, upon this ſubject. But this was not the only ſubject upon which their opinions were in uniſon. Sir, I recollect, more than twenty-five years ago, ſitting in that gallery, when their eloquence, like the ſtreams of two mighty rivers, united againſt the ſtate of repreſentation of the people in this Houſe; and what followed? The Houſe was delighted, but not convinced. And yet was there any doubt that the ſtate of the repreſentation of the people was unequal, nay defective and faulty? Was there not, as upon this queſtion, a moſt prevalent and clamorous opinion out of doors? The machine too was in our hands; no co-operation was needed; we could trace effect directly to its cauſe; we could ſubſtitute inſtantly the new fabric for the old one; what was it then that ſtopped our hands? Sir, the Houſe acknowledged the evil, but dreaded the remedy. It was the ſentiment of the majority in that day

' Rather to bear the ills they had,
' Than fly to others which they know not of;'

and the legiſlature felt itſelf bound to delay the remedy of an acknowledged evil, contrary to the ſentiments of the people out of doors, and of the greateſt orators within.

" It is unfair then to call thoſe who oppoſe the preſent bill the abettors of Slavery and of the Slave Trade. If a bill were brought into this Houſe with a view to aboliſh forgery, it might take for for its preamble properly enough—' Whereas forgery is contrary to juſtice;' but if it were to go on to prohibit the uſe of paper as a medium of exchange, although ſuch a proviſion might render forgeries leſs frequent, yet thoſe who ſhould perceive the

 inexpediency

inexpediency of ſuch a meaſure, and ſhould therefore oppoſe the bill, ought they to be denominated the abettors of forgery? I find myſelf, Sir, exactly thus placed, in reſpect to the bill now under conſideration. No one values more the bleſſing of liberty, or regrets more the exiſtence and baneful effects of Slavery—no one is more ready to promote whatever may remedy the abuſes of the Slave Trade, or mitigate the miſeries of a ſtate of Slavery—but this bill, Sir, is not, in my opinion, calculated to accompliſh thoſe objects.

"The noble Lord (HOWICK) might have ſpared himſelf the proof of the ſmall value of the African part of the trade; it has been reduced by ſucceſſive Acts of Parliament into the mere means of neceſſary ſupply to the population of our old colonies; and, had not thoſe colonies ſeen abolition ſuſpended over their heads, their ſupply would have been ſtill ſmaller. There is, in fact, Sir, no encouragement to the extenſion of cultivation in the colonies, under the expence of purchaſing Negroes for that purpoſe. I do not believe, that were you to remove the dread of abolition, our old colonies would require annually more than ſeven thouſand imported Slaves: and looking to this limited trade as neceſſary for the welfare of the colonies, and as ſubject to wiſe and humane regulations, looking alſo to what is and has been the ſtate of ſociety in Africa, I cannot think that this remnant of the trade calls upon us for its abolition.

"Sir, there has been a very prevalent miſrepreſentation of what was the ſtate of Africa previous to the colonial demand for Slaves. I have ſeen publications extenſively circulated, which aſſert, that its wars and its miſeries are all imputable to the European Slave Trade. There is a pamphlet which has the reſpectable name of a noble Lord, a member of this Houſe affixed to it, which adverting to the account given by LEO AFRICANUS (who wrote about the middle of the 15th century) of the negro nations, ſtates, upon his authority, that the Africans *never made war;* and that the whole of the Slave Trade now carried on by the Europeans has been entirely brought about by the nations of Europe. Now, Sir, it may ſeem extraordinary, but it is nevertheleſs true, that although the intelligent

ligent hiſtorian, LEO AFRICANUS, does indeed ſtate, that, according to the accounts of ſome *preceding traveller*, the inhabitants of Negro Land lead a brutal life, waging no wars, nor ſeeking conqueſts, yet he, who travelled through theſe countries himſelf, ſtates of many of the ſovereigns of thoſe parts, that they were perpetually at war, and liable to frequent predatory incurſions from their neighbours. At Tombuctoo, in particular, Slaves were publicly ſold to the Moors and to the Egyptians, and at ſo cheap a rate, that fifteen to twenty were paid for one horſe—horſes being wanted for the purpoſes of war. In the work of LEO AFRICANUS, Sir, we ſee Africa, at this early day, inviting the Slave Trade, not the Slave Trade ſeducing Africa. I might quote other paſſages from this hiſtorian, with ſome effect, but I will beg to refer gentlemen to the book itſelf, and to the voyages of CADEMOSTA, who wrote about the ſame time, and whoſe evidence has alſo been miſrepreſented. Theſe accounts are not, Sir, actually anterior to the commencement of the Portugueſe Slave Trade upon the coaſt, but they have not the ſmalleſt connexion with that trade, which commenced, as I underſtand, in another and more ſouthern diſtrict of the coaſt.* I will alſo, Sir, beg leave to call the attention of gentlemen to the accounts of the travellers BRUCE and PARKE, and more eſpecially of the latter; and I will venture to ſay, that the whole tenor of what he tells us of the Negro nations does not ſhew that we ſhall better their condition by abandoning this trade. What Mr. PARKE has written of the Negro nations may be advantageouſly compared with the comment which Mr. MALTHUS has connected with it in his book upon population. I do not, Sir, know the ſentiments of Mr. MALTHUS on the Slave Trade, but from what I read in his book, I gather no hopes of accompliſhing a ſalutary revolution in the ſtate of Africa by the operation of this bill.

"Theſe are my reaſons, Sir, for doubting whether even a concurrent abolition of the Slave Trade would benefit Africa; but an abandonment of that ſmall ſhare which we now carry on under the ſtricteſt regulations,

* The Portugueſe Slave Trade began not on the ſouthern coaſt, but on that part called the windward coaſt. Editor.

 cannot

cannot have the ſmalleſt effect towards that object. It has the diſadvantage of precluding the hope of a concurrent abolition, and of inviting our rivals to aſſume our place in the trade. It opens the door to France to form and to extends colonies, and forbids us to recruit thoſe we poſſeſs by an imported population. Is it, Sir, a doubt whether France will greedily avail herſelf of this opportunity? Is it not an acknowledged axiom of French policy, that her colonial and naval power muſt riſe and fall together? We have the recent declaration of him who is now at the head of her government, to this effect; and the hiſtory of the French commerce and maritime ſtrength juſtifies the policy. Is it a doubt, Sir, with any man in this Houſe, whether France will, at a peace, ſeek to render her Weſt India colonies flouriſhing, and ſeek to do it by recruiting their population from Africa? As to the Spaniſh ſhare of the trade, an Honourable Baronet, once a Member of this Houſe, and then one of the firſt, if not the firſt, merchant in Europe, was, ſoon after the peace of Amiens, at Paris, where he was applied to by one of the moſt reſpectable mercantile houſes of that capital, in conjunction with another at Madrid, to undertake the furniſhing of fifteen thouſand African Slaves for Cuba. My friend replied, that his houſe had no concern in the African Trade: however, he undertook to furniſh them with the correcteſt information from Liverpool and London upon the ſubject. He did ſo; and the reſult was, that they ſaid they could be ſupplied otherwiſe upon cheaper terms. However humane our regulations might be, they rendered the freight of the Negro too dear, and that would not ſuit them. This, Sir, is a ſingle fact, but it is an authentic and recent one, and of magnitude enough to lead us to reflect how far we conduce to the advantage of Africa, by abandoning our part of this Trade.

"It cannot be doubted, Sir, that in the Weſt Indies the treatment of Slaves has been progreſſively ameliorated. The accounts which have been produced and cited by the noble Lord * tend to prove it. It is ſtated in thoſe accounts, that the increaſe by births in proportion to the

* Lord Howick.

deaths

deaths, has, as far as it can be aſcertained by the accounts, been advancing: and what are we to gather from this, Sir, but that the Planters do not need the compulſion which you pretend to lay upon them by this bill, to treat their Slaves with humanity? If this fact be connected with the ſmall amount of that ſupply which the iſlands now need, do we not ſee that all the objects which the Aboliti-oniſts profeſs to have in view are gained or gaining—that the ſupply itſelf is leſſening, and the need of that ſupply leſſening too? And this we find is progreſſively effecting without violence, without a meaſure that may elevate the blacks into phrenzy, and plunge the whites into deſpair.

" Admit, however, that population by natural means is generally on the advance, or rather that, barring accidents, the decreaſe is leſs rapid than it has been, this will not reach individual caſes, nor will it remedy thoſe accidents which humanity and vigilance neither can foreſee nor prevent, and which have ſo often depopulated particular diſtricts and whole iſlands.

" Of the inſtances of cruelty which an honourable General has detailed to the Houſe, two, I obſerve, were perpetrated by females; and I hope that the trite obſervation—*Corruptio bonarum peſſima*—may be applied to theſe caſes. If there exiſt the ſmalleſt doubt whether the general treatment of the Slaves in the Weſt Indies be kind and humane, why not ſend out a parliamentary commiſſion, to enquire into and to report the facts, rather than ſubject a large claſs of Britiſh ſubjects to the odium of their countrymen, by preſenting, under aggravated colours, a few inſtances of atrocity, committed by individuals, of whom good and bad are to be found in every ſociety? I can ſtate, with the utmoſt truth, that I have been connected as a merchant with about ſixty eſtates in the iſland of Jamaica, and that, in the late diſtreſſes of the trade, we have been compelled to obſerve the utmoſt economy in the amount and value of the ſupplies ſent out; and yet in not one inſtance have we curtailed, or been deſired to curtail, the articles ſent out for the uſe and comfort of the Negroes, although, in almoſt every inſtance, we have done ſo in reſpect to thoſe for the uſe of the whites.

" There

" There is not yet, Sir, any diſtinct underſtanding whether this bill is or is not to be accompanied with a proviſion of compenſation for thoſe whom its operation may injure; and, unleſs ſome pledge to that effect be given, I muſt conſider that the injuſtice it may inflict upon individuals is a fair argument againſt its principle. The noble Lord has ſtated, that it has not been uſual for Parliament to provide compenſation proſpectively; and yet, Sir, in recent inſtances, I mean in the Weſt India and London Dock Acts, a proviſion of proſpective compenſation is made for every deſcription of perſons to whoſe injury thoſe bills might operate. There are, Sir, in this country, many large factories built, where three or four hundred perſons are often confined together, employed in the ſpinning of cotton and ſilk: thoſe eſtabliſhments, though advantageous in a commercial view, are fatal it will be allowed both to the health and to the morals of his Majeſty's ſubjects: now, ſuppoſing that the philanthropic ſpirit were to extend to them, and we were to ſay, 'We pretend not to interfere with what exiſts already; keep the labourers you have got, we wont emancipate them, they are not fit for emancipation; but not one more ruddy-cheeked boy or blooming girl ſhall you ſeduce from their ignorant and deluded parents, and immure in your putrid haunts of vice and diſeaſe. Tell us not of your ventilators and your artificial gaſſes; the thing is contrary to firſt principles, and it muſt be diſcontinued.' Now, can we believe that he who has juſt built, at conſiderable expence, one of thoſe factories, and had partially, or not at all, ſupplied it with labourers, would not in this caſe call aloud for compenſation? and could that compenſation be juſtly denied to him? And yet, Sir, the ſilk and cotton factor has no greater legiſlative authority to plead than has the Weſt India Planter for his eſtabliſhment; nor is the ſuppoſed caſe which I have put of the former harder than the real one of the latter, after this bill paſſes; and, independently of the general caſe, there are individual caſes of peculiar hardſhip, thoſe of minors, of leſſors, and of proprietors of eſtates under truſt, whoſe eſtates will be either conſiderably depreciated, or of no value at all.

" There

"There are ſome, Sir, who will admit the truth of many of the conſiderations I have urged—'But,' ſay they, 'there is connected with the Slave Trade much abuſe and much inhumanity, and, at all events, we will waſh our hands of any ſhare in it.' Gentlemen ſhould conſider, Sir, how far they would follow this principle, and whither it would lead them; it would certainly go the length of ſuppreſſing the licencing of alehouſes, and the continuance of lotteries. Can the miſchiefs with which theſe are connected in ſociety be doubted? If, Sir, I were inclined to attempt the feelings of Gentlemen in this Houſe with a pathetic ſtory, I could ſhew them, and at no great diſtance from the metropolis, an induſtrious mother with ſix or eight children, their countenances pale, their limbs emaciated, and their bodies ſwoln with famine, picking up a ſcanty ſubſiſtence by the only labour which ſuch feeble hands can execute, while the father of this family, he who ought to ſupport them, is taking what is called a plunge at the neighbouring alehouſe, ſpending the fruits of one week's labour, and mortgaging that of another; and this after having carried away the leathern bag from the cottage roof, which contained the pence and ſixpences, the hard ſavings of the year (ſaved to pay the rent at Lady-day), and having ſunk the whole of it with one of thoſe itinerant propagators of ruin who now invade the privacy of your remoteſt villages with a cart ſtuck over with lottery bills. This, Sir, is not a fictitious nor an uncommon caſe, and yet our philanthropiſts do not make it the theme of declamation, or the object of reform. This is too near and too obvious for them—their aim is more diſtant, their ſcope is larger. The ſpirit of modern reform does not act, Sir, like the rational principle of ſelf-love ſo beautifully deſcribed by the poet, which firſt puts the centre in motion, and then extends itſelf in progreſſive circles of beneficence to the extremities. The ſpirit of modern reform attacks at once the connecting chain of the ſyſtem, and, if the whole do not fall to pieces with its touch, it works inwards till it ſhakes the centre. I muſt, for the reaſons I have given, vote againſt the ſecond reading of the bill."

Mr.

Mr. WILBERFORCE.—" Sir, it is far from my intention to detain the Houſe for many minutes at this late hour, when I feel myſelf incapable of adding weight to the arguments which have been adduced, or force to the eloquence which has been diſplayed. But the Honourable Gentleman who ſpoke laſt made to the Houſe ſome remarks which renders it neceſſary for me to treſpaſs on your time for a few moments.

" I have liſtened with ſingular attention to what has fallen from Honourable Gentlemen to-night, and particularly to the Gentleman who has juſt ſat down. Knowing his habits of life, and his reſpectability of character, I was curious to ſee, in what new form this ſubject had preſented itſelf to him. I muſt confeſs, that I was a little diſappointed; becauſe his view of it was narrow and contracted, in a degree which I could not have previouſly conceived.

" It has been ſaid, Sir, that it was wholly unneceſſary to aboliſh the Slave Trade, becauſe, in time, the Planters of the iſlands would aboliſh it themſelves. How much, Sir, and how fully is this contradicted, when we ſee them importing negroes every day in vaſt quantities, not to ſupply the waſted population merely, but to increaſe their wealth by the cultivation of new lands at an enormous expence of African life. It ſurprized me, Sir, not a little, to obſerve, how little aware that Honourable Gentleman ſeemed to be of this fact. Is he then ſo little converſant with the documents which have been laid upon your table? Does he not know that the aſſembly of Jamaica, and that of the other iſlands, were applied to by letter from his Majeſty's Secretary of State, to take ſuch ſteps for improving the population in the iſlands as might render the continuance of the Slave Trade at length unneceſſary? And does he not know that the aſſembly of Jamaica, inſtead of accedirg to his Majeſty's wiſh, replied by an addreſs, in which they expreſſed themſelves decidedly hoſtile to any plans which ſhould have in view the abolition of the Slave Trade, at any time however diſtant; a ſentiment in which the legiſlatures of the other iſlands concurred? Does he not alſo know, that in a report of the ſame aſſembly of Jamaica, which was afterwards preſented to this Houſe, they

they diſtinctly ſtate, that though they might endeavour to improve the condition of their Slaves in any other way, yet they could not concur in doing it with any view to the abolition of the Slave Trade. That trade they aſſerted to be their juſt and inalienable birth-right. They at the ſame time reminded the Houſe, of what perhaps it was before aware, that more than two-thirds of the iſland of Jamaica was ſtill uncultivated, and that the Slave Trade was neceſſary, in order to bring the waſte lands into cultivation. And this reaſoning the Honourable Gentleman muſt know will apply in great meaſure to all the other iſlands in the Weſt Indies; that it applies particularly to Trinidad, in which, perhaps, there is a ſtill greater quantity of uncultivated land than even in Jamaica itſelf. If therefore the importation of ſlaves were to be permitted until the whole were cultivated, it would be impoſſible for us to define any limits to which it might not extend. And indeed in reading all the addreſſes from the Weſt Indies, and particularly from Jamaica, it is impoſſible to put any other conſtruction on their language than this, that they muſt go on cultivating the iſlands until the whole is brought into a ſtate of tillage, which can not poſſibly be done in a ſhorter period than 240 years, and which would occaſion the importation of 1,240,000 Negroes, before it could be completed.

" So far from contradicting the facts which have been brought forward by my noble Friend, the honourable Member has admitted the ſtate of population to be as has been aſſerted, and it muſt be obvious that he cannot fairly uſe the argument ariſing from the circumſtance both ways. Having adopted however the calculations of my noble friend reſpecting the Weſt Indies, we are now fully intitled to reaſon upon them. Thoſe calculations were drawn up by that great maſter of policy ſo often referred to in the courſe of this night. (Mr. PITT.) They have been canvaſſed with all the care which could be beſtowed upon the ſubject; they have ſtood the teſt of the moſt rigid ſcrutiny and examination, and they remain to this day unanſwered. Nay, the ſubſequent information which we have received, has convinced us of the general correctneſs

rectneſs both of the calculations, and of the reaſonings which have been founded upon them.

" The honourable Member talked much, at the beginning of his ſpeech as well as at the concluſion of it, of the hard uſage the Weſt India Planters had received in the courſe of the diſcuſſions on the abolition of the Slave Trade; but from the very firſt day I engaged in this diſcuſſion, I endeavoured to abſtain from expreſſing ſentiments reflecting on the conduct of the Weſt India body. Yet what could the honourable Member expect? Does he expect, does he really mean that from tenderneſs to that body we ſhould compliment away the univerſal feelings of human nature? It has been ſaid, Sir, during the courſe of the debate, that the white men do not abuſe the power which is placed in their hands, and that notwithſtanding the difficulty of bringing them to juſtice, they treat the Negroes with humanity and kindneſs; and that he who aſſerts the contrary, is guilty of the groſſeſt calumny. But what ſays the recent correſpondence of my Lord SEAFORTH? Does it not ſpeak a language which muſt fill every man with horror, as he reads of the unabating ſeverity and miſguided prejudices of all orders of the whites, againſt the unfortunate Slaves; and finds that barbarity and cruelty, inſtead of exciting their ſympathy and compaſſion, only gives riſe to their reſentment.

But that honourable Member would not only have us give up our underſtanding, but every thing that experience has taught us; he would have us believe, that the treatment of the weak by the ſtrong, of the poor by the rich, is totally different in the Weſt Indies, from what we have ever witneſſed in any other part of the world. Sir, we are not to be led away by ſuch futile remarks; we have a duty to diſcharge to a multitude of human beings, whoſe happineſs depends upon our deciſion. The feelings of the human heart have been invoked in favour of the Planters of our iſlands; now let us apply thoſe feelings, as we have been told to-night, not to the oppreſſor, but to the oppreſſed. Let us recollect, that we have a duty to perform to the Africans, that we have no right to trifle with their privileges, that we have no authority to compliment away their liberties; and let us conſider them, as

if

if we ourſelves had been placed under ſimilar circumſtances. What would then have been our expectations from the Parliament of Great Britain? I cannot ſeverely cenſure the conduct of thoſe honourable Gentlemen who have oppoſed us in this diſcuſſion; all I impute to them is, that they have yielded to the force of circumſtances. The habits of the mind are formed by ten thouſand circumſtances, although for that formation we are unable to account. In this debate objects are preſented to our view in the ſhape of human beings, whom the minds of honourable Gentlemen are ſo unaccuſtomed to contemplate as ſuch, that we forget they are our brethren, and conſider them not as fellow-creatures. It is not thoſe honourable Members that I blame, it is not they that are in fault; it is we that are to blame, it is we that are in fault, for having ſuffered this trade to continue ſo long as it has. But if we had before been aware that the caſe was ſuch as it is now repreſented to us, I am confident that we ſhould, as we do now, have attempted its abolition, and our apology that we have not done it before is, that we were ignorant of the true ſtate of the caſe.

" The honourable Member ſeemed diſpoſed to argue, that the Slave Trade was authorized by the ſacred writings, and to ſupport this poſition, he alludes ſomewhat unfortunately to the caſe of Philemon's ſlave, Oneſimus. But how different are all the circumſtances there mentioned from what we might ſuppoſe to exiſt in the Weſt Indies. Compare but the manner in which this ſervant is ſent back to his maſter, as it is related in the ſcriptures, and the manner in which the runaway ſlave would return to his owner on a Weſt Indian plantation, and you will ſee the ſtriking contraſt. 'Receive him,' ſays the apoſtle, 'not now as a ſervant, but above a ſervant, a brother beloved, ſpecially to me, but much more to thee.' What does the honourable Gentleman ſuppoſe would be the feelings of a Weſt India Proprietor on receiving a ſimilar requeſt in behalf of his negro? a brother! a brother beloved!

" I cannot, however, help ſaying a few words, unwilling as I am to detain the Houſe, upon the manner in which this ſubject has been treated by the honourable Gentle-

man. What is the effect of the trade? It is to ſnatch thouſands and tens of thouſands of miſerable beings from their families, their friends, and their country, who are happy in the ſituation in which it has pleaſed Providence to place them, and then to convey them to a ſlave ſhip: afterwards they are conducted to a foreign ſettlement, where they are ſubjected to all the miſery which a ſtate of abject ſlavery can be ſuppoſed to produce. I will not proceed with this painful recital, I will leave the honourable Member to reflect, if the feelings of his own heart, and the correctneſs of his underſtanding do not make further explanation utterly unneceſſary. Authorities indeed have been cited: Leo Africanus, Malthus, and Park, have been adverted to; but this I will venture to ſay, that none of them juſtify the aſſertions made by the honourable Members who have ſupported the oppoſite ſide of this queſtion. Certainly Leo does ſtate, that the Africans are liable to be acted upon by human paſſions, and that they engage in wars: but ought we therefore to excite theſe paſſions; ought we to ſtimulate wars; ought we to encourage them to accuſe each other of crimes for which there is no foundation, that we may drag them into a never ceaſing ſlavery?

"With regard to what Mr. Malthus is ſuppoſed to have ſupported, I will juſt ſay a few words. That author happened to hear that his book had been mentioned as authorizing and upholding the Slave Trade; in conſequence of which he this very day called on me, and expreſſed his utter aſtoniſhment that any thing he ſtated could be ſo conſtrued, for that every concluſion he had drawn, was directly the reverſe of what was ſuppoſed: and he told me, that in order to prevent the effects of this miſconſtruction, he had publiſhed a few pages of an appendix, which he left with me.

"The honourable Member has alſo taken an opportunity of painting the evils of the lottery; and aſked why we did not attempt rather to aboliſh theſe evils, which were within our view, than to waſte our benevolence on Africa and the Weſt Indies. I freely confeſs that the lottery is a mode of obtaining money which I exceedingly diſlike and reprobate, and which I ſhould be moſt glad to correct;

rect; but let us not draw any compariſon between the lottery and that moſt nefarious traffic—the Slave Trade. Is it not moſt humiliating to ſee ſuch men as the honourable Gentleman traverſing the globe, ſcrutinizing every corner of the world to diſcover, if they can, ſome evil which may ſerve as a foil to the Slave Trade. This, Sir, is the leſſon of humanity we are taught by the honourable Member, and ſuch are the principles he employs againſt the abolition. He points out various abuſes, not for the purpoſe of putting an end to them, but in order to obtain a toleration for other abuſes ſtill greater. He would be well content, if the Houſe inſtead of, for ever, putting an end, as I think they will now do, to this traffic; inſtead of reſtoring to the miſerable Africans ſome chance of an immunity from the enormous evils which oppreſs them, would permit that trade and the lottery, with all their abuſes, to pair off together. [Loud acclamations of hear! hear! hear!]

"There is one other topic, Sir, upon which I will obſerve for an inſtant. The Conſtitution of this country is ſuch, as perhaps to render it the happieſt which is viſited with the light of day; and the benefits which the country derives from it, are innumerable. Can the honourable Member ſay the ſame of the laws of the Weſt Indies; can he declare that the Africans derive benefit from them? No, Sir, and why ſhould they not partake of the comforts to be derived from our conſtitution?—I may now look forward with expectation to the time, when thoſe comforts may be ſafely extended to our ſable brethren in the Weſt Indies; and when the beams of ſcience ſhall penetrate even into the interior of Africa. And in this view it gives me unſpeakable ſatisfaction to ſee, that ſo many of the younger Members of this Aſſembly, have ſhewn themſelves ſo well acquainted with the duty they owe to ſociety, as to come forward and in ſo able a manner, and on ſuch juſt principles, to plead the cauſe of the oppreſſed."

[On this point Mr. WILBERFORCE enlarged, paying many merited compliments to Lord MAHON, Lord MILTON, and others who had preceded him. But the concluding

cluding part of his ſpeech, it is greatly to be regretted, was not taken by the reporter.]

Mr. MANNING.—[The clamour excited in the Houſe by the frequent repetitions of queſtion, queſtion, queſtion, rendered it impoſſible to hear much of the addreſs of this honourable Member.]

" After having liſtened with the greateſt attention to the arguments offered by the honourable General and others, againſt the paſſing of this Bill, I am, nevertheleſs, convinced that the abolition of the African Slave Trade would not be attended with the injury ſo much feared by thoſe who repreſent the intereſts of the Weſt India Merchants of this country, and who likewiſe eſpouſe the cauſe of the Weſt India Planters. I, Sir, have an eſtate in the Britiſh Colonies, and I confeſs that I feel no apprehenſion of the number of Negroes being decreaſed. In the Daniſh Iſland of Santa Cruz I have likewiſe property, and there, His Majeſty the King of Denmark, after great conſideration, by an edict paſſed in the year 1783, put an end to the importation of ſlaves, after ten years ſhould have elapſed. It is evidence ſufficient to guide my opinion, that ſince that period, the Negro population in that Iſland has not decreaſed in the ſmalleſt degree, and has therefore required no aſſiſtance of that kind, either by importation from Africa, or from the Colonies. I am ſorry to have detained the Houſe at this late hour, but I felt it my duty to ſay a few words on perhaps the moſt important queſtion that was ever agitated within theſe walls."

The queſtion was now ſtill more loudly called for, when,

Mr. HILEY ADDINGTON roſe to addreſs the Speaker, but in conſequence of the diſturbance, it was impoſſible to collect more than that the honourable Member could only conſent to give his vote in ſupport of this Bill upon the principle mentioned by his right honourable relation, (Mr. BATHURST) viz. that of putting off the Abolition of the African Trade to a more diſtant period, that the Planters and Merchants of the Weſt Indies might have an opportunity of preparing themſelves againſt the time, when

when that compleat concluſion of the trade might take place.

The queſtion was ſtill called for, when

Lord PERCY ſaid, that he ſhould wiſh to preſent to the Houſe on a future day, a clauſe to be inſerted in the preſent Bill, which was, that every child born within the limits of His Majeſty's dominions ſubſequent to the 1ſt of January, 1810, ſhould be declared free.

The queſtion was now again loudly called for, and ſtrangers having withdrawn, the Houſe divided, and the numbers were,

Ayes - - -	283
Noes - - -	16
Majority	267

The Houſe, pro formâ, reſolved itſelf into a Committee, and adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

FRIDAY, FEB. 27, 1807.

Lord HOWICK.—"I move the order of the day, for the Houſe reſolving itſelf into a committee on the bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade."

On the queſtion being put for the Speaker to leave the chair,

Sir CHARLES POLE roſe.—"Sir, I have heard arguments the moſt powerful that the reaſon of man can employ, in favour of this bill, yet I feel ſo ſtrongly its pernicious tendency, that I conſider it my duty to oppoſe it in all its ſtages, and I cannot avoid again forcing myſelf upon your notice, to warn the Houſe of theſe injurious conſequences.

"Sir, it is to the colonies, and to our commerce, that this

this country is indebted for its ſupport; and knowing the neceſſity of maintaining theſe, and the importance of this trade to their ſupport, I muſt conſider the paſſing of this bill as one of thoſe events which will more effectually aſſiſt Buonaparte in his projects of ambition againſt the Britiſh empire, than any other which could be deviſed. It will give to him all the advantages of a commercial marine, it will give to him the means of ſupplying a powerful navy, of which he is now deprived.

" Sir, there is a change in the ſituation of the colonies, to which none of the former evidence could be applicable; and this change, co-operating with the revolutions which have taken place in Europe, has ſo far altered the relative poſition of Great Britain with regard to other powers, as to make it peculiarly neceſſary that I ſhould detain the Houſe for a ſhort time, by drawing its attention to ſome important particulars.

" Whatever may have been the ability diſplayed in the courſe of theſe diſcuſſions, I may venture to ſay, that much of the reaſoning adduced has been grounded on falſe premiſes, and much of the declamation employed has not been in the ſmalleſt degree relevant to the caſe before you. I did hear of cruelties and atrocities painted in the ſtrongeſt colours, yet they were as diſtinct from any thing connected with the preſent queſtion, as if they had been perpetrated in New Zealand. The flagitious conduct referred to, was not any thing that has occurred ſince the amelioration of the trade, under the humane regulations to which it has been ſubjected. It is not idle and inapplicable tales of this kind which ſhould furniſh the defence for the preſent bill; for if there be a meaſure conteſted in this Houſe which puts to riſk your commerce, your colonies, and your navy, it is this queſtion, and it ought to be coolly and deliberately conſidered. I am not, Sir, one of thoſe, who, on any occaſion, would juſtify cruelty, but there is a great improvement in the condition of the Negroes, and we ought to know its extent before we decide on a matter which expoſes to hazard, more than one-third of the export trade of this country. I believe the exports to the Weſt Indies frequently amount to £2,000,000 ſterling, and the imports from thence to

£10,000,000

£10,000,000 ſterling. Theſe are not trifles, Sir, and, at leaſt, there is no evidence to countervail ſuch pernicious conſequences. With reſpect to the marine, it puts to riſk 1000 ſhips, manned with 18,000 ſeamen. Theſe are not trifles, Sir, and, unhappily, theſe are not the only objections: there are others of a very ſerious nature, and if I were not ſtrongly impreſſed, I certainly ſhould not have troubled the Houſe in this ſtage of the bill. I will hold up the pernicious effects of the meaſure to your obſervation, and if I cannot do all the good which ought to be done, I will do as much as I can. I ſhall ſubmit to the judgment of the Committee a prolongation of the time, at leaſt to poſtpone this project and its evil effects until it is better underſtood. I ſhall alſo endeavour to impreſs upon the Committee the abſurdity and miſchief with which it muſt be attended."

Mr. Wynne.—" Unwilling as I am to delay this meaſure in its progreſs, what has fallen from the gallant and honourable member, induces me to ſay a few words. He ſeems to think that there is ſome danger that this bill will be carried through by ſurprize, and he wiſhes that the Houſe may have time to recover itſelf from the impoſing effect of ſpeeches addreſſed with ſo much urgency the other night. I believe there is no man in the Houſe more inſenſible than I ſhould be to popular clamour, but, Sir, there is a material diſtinction to be attended to, I mean the difference, between popular clamour, and public opinion. If we can, at any time, diſtinguiſh between the two, we can do ſo moſt eminently, and moſt ſatisfactorily, on a ſubject which has for twenty years been under diſcuſſion.

" But, Sir, notwithſtanding this protracted enquiry, it is at this day ſaid that we have no recent evidence, as if the recent teſtimony of Lord Seaforth were not to be received as evidence; as if the teſtimony of the aſſemblies of the iſlands were not to be received as evidence; as if the declaration of one of thoſe aſſemblies were not the moſt powerful evidence, " they knew;" " how to reſent," they ſay, " the inſult" of a propoſal from this country to

puniſh murder with more ſeverity than by a fine of eleven pounds four ſhillings ſterling.

" I do not wiſh to delay the Committee a moment, excepting for the purpoſe of alluding generally to what has been ſaid; I am not now deſirous to ſtate other points which affect both the honour of the country, and the dignity of human nature, each of which, I think, to be materially concerned in the ſucceſs of the meaſure."

Mr. HUGHAN.—" I hope this ſubject will be diſcuſſed with all that candour and liberality that its importance demands. I think no Gentleman who has yet ſpoken upon it, has pretended to explain to you the condition of the negroes, from his own obſervation, during a reſidence in the Weſt Indies. Having paſſed ten years of my life in that part of the world, I hope I ſhall be permitted to ſtate my opinion on the condition of this order of people, at leaſt in one of the colonies; and I truſt I may alſo be allowed to deliver my ſentiments in favour of a ſyſtem, adopted by our anceſtors, under which this country has attained its preſent ſplendour and proſperity.

" I am aware of the difficulty to which I am expoſed, in taking the part which I ſhall do in this debate, and indeed I ſhould have been myſelf aſtoniſhed if the Houſe had come to any other deciſion than it has done, for could I have ſuppoſed, that half of thoſe miſeries which have been deſcribed actually exiſted, I ſhould have conſidered myſelf moſt unjuſt and cruel, if I alſo had not joined in the vote which has been given. Knowing, however, that the tales, which have been related, are unfounded, I hope I may be permitted to queſtion the propriety of the determination made on that occaſion.

" I hope I ſhall be allowed to ſtate very ſhortly, in the courſe of what I have to ſay, ſome particulars which have been incorrectly noticed. It is very confidently aſſerted, that nothing new could be ſuggeſted in the extenſive range of facts connected with this enquiry. I would aſk, Sir, if nothing has tranſpired which is new in regard to the inſurrection in Grenada? Nothing new affecting the caribs in St. Vincent's? Are there no events in Jamaica to which the evidence on your table does not apply? and

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will not the revolution in St. Domingo furniſh materials ſufficiently important to the deciſion of this queſtion?—Sir, what has happened in St. Domingo deſerves the moſt ſerious attention. My principal mortification is, that the Houſe has not thought fit to be apprized of all the circumſtances in an affair of this magnitude. Next to this diſappointment, I lament, that independently of the teſtimony, the diſcuſſion itſelf has not been conducted by ſome honourable members in that mode which is beſt calculated to throw light upon the ſubject. The noble Lord (Howick) in particular, when he brought forward this bill, addreſſed the Houſe in that ſtrain of eloquence of which he is ſo capable, and in conſequence of this exerciſe of his extraordinary powers, he gave a tone and temper to the evening, ill adapted to the buſineſs before the Houſe. There were no means of cool reflection; honourable gentlemen caught the ſame flame of enthuſiaſm, and no man who heard the noble Lord, full of that animation with which he was inſpired, could be aſtoniſhed at the deciſion. While the elder members were reſtrained within ſome bounds, the younger ones ſeemed diſinclined to ſtop where the noble Lord recommended them to pauſe, and were diſpoſed to proceed at once to the complete emancipation of the Slaves in the Weſt Indies.

" At the ſame time that I acknowledge that the trade ought at ſome period to be put an end to, I am deſirous of ſaying a few words as to the real condition of the negroes, knowing, as I do, theſe happy and contented beings; for happy and contented they are, if I may judge of men by the outward expreſſion of their feelings; for more joy and cheerfulneſs I never ſaw in any other ſituation. Contraſt this ſtate of our reſident negroes with the condition of the ſame order of perſons in the colony of St. Domingo. There, Sir, they have obtained that ſpecies of freedom to which they madly aſpired, but they are now groaning under the moſt intolerably tyranny, and are expoſed to all that oppreſſion which has been ſo pathetically deſcribed.

" Sir, I was extremely ſorry when a learned Gentleman, who took great pains to explain what the law was in the Weſt Indies, appeared to be ſo little informed in

that ſubject. He ſaid, that all the laws which had been enacted for the ſafety and comfort of the negroes, were merely held out as deluſions to impoſe upon this country, and I am concerned, that he had not, at leaſt, the candour to allow what is conceded in the publication of the honourable Member for the county of York, on this ſubject. I am ſure, no man can more ſincerely lament than I do, that the Aſſembly of Barbadoes ſhould have given ſo much cauſe for animadverſion.

" With reſpect to the general queſtion, it is not my deſign to go into it at large, but there is one part which ſtrikes me particularly. We have heard a great deal of the hardſhip and cruelty of bringing the negroes from their homes, from their country, and their friends, on the continent of Africa; but Gentlemen forget the ſort of population which prevails there. I conſider the number of Slaves to bear a greater proportion to the general maſs than Mr. Parke ſeems to admit. Perhaps a ſingle fact on the authority of that writer will tend more to illuſtrate this part of the caſe than any looſe obſervations. A king of that country is ſtated to have taken, on the occaſion of ſome military expedition, 900 priſoners, and out of this number there were only 70 perſons of free condition. This fact, from Mr. Parke, I oppoſe to his own concluſions, and I believe therefore, that a greater proportion of the population of Africa is in a ſtate of ſlavery than he admits. Now, I think, that the moſt ſanguine friends of this meaſure will allow, that the purchaſing ſlaves is a very different thing to ſeizing freemen, and forcing them into a ſtate of ſlavery.

" But it is more immediately my object to bring within the view of the Houſe thoſe conſequences which will reſult from the ſudden abolition of the Slave Trade. Firſt, conſidering this trade in its relation to our own iſlands, I ſay, that the Weſt India colonies have long been the ſupport of the commercial greatneſs of this country. Theſe ſettlements actually depend, for their cultivation, on the imports from Africa, and the riſk that the ceſſation of theſe will occaſion, and the hazard by the diſpoſition this change will excite, are circumſtances that to me appear to deſerve the moſt ſerious conſideration.

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" I am afraid it would be thought tedious in me, if I were to attempt to explain the mode by which the ſafety of theſe colonies would be moſt ſucceſsfully promoted. The increaſe of the white population is one of the ſubjects that the noble Lord (Howick) firſt touched upon; but he did not ſeem at all to underſtand how this deſirable object was to be effected by the abolition. It would be fatiguing to go through the details referable to this part of the caſe, but perhaps there is more evil to be apprehended from the diminution of the whites, than even from the reduction in the population of the blacks. If the whites are deprived of the means of improving their fortunes, they muſt decreaſe in number, becauſe the inducements hitherto held out will be withdrawn, and men accuſtomed to the clement ſkies of Europe, will not venture their health and their lives in a precarious climate, unleſs ſome ſtrong motive, ſuch as a rapid acquiſition of property, ſhould impel them to forego other advantages. Sir, the population in the Weſt Indies is not a natural, but it is a forced population, and it is thus forced to fulfil a particular purpoſe, and that is, to carry on and improve the cultivation of the iſlands. Every thing is not pernicious that does not tend to advance the population of a country. Your navy and your army do not advance the population here, but they are neceſſary for the national defence; ſo for another object, we have a forced population in the Weſt Indies. If the cultivation of the iſlands be material to the welfare of this nation, a certain waſte of life muſt be ſuffered, as in many of our great manufactories: health and life may ſometimes be ſecondary conſiderations. There is one thing which is loſt ſight of by the advocates of the abolition of this trade, and that is a thing of no ſmall importance, I mean the end to be attained. If the honourable member for Yorkſhire could ſatisfy my mind, that the happineſs of the negroes would be promoted by the meaſure, I ſhould without heſitation agree to have the trade extinguiſhed; but, Sir, whether we advert to the circumſtance of the large proportion of ſlaves in Africa, or to the impoſſibility of procuring the concurrence of other nations in the abolition, it appears to me, that the deſign, however meritorious in itſelf, will be fruſtrated. With reſpect to the latter, a

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ſhort review of the extent of the trade would ſatisfy every mind, not ſtrongly prejudiced by the enthuſiaſm of the times, that the abolition by this country muſt be utterly nugatory as to the ultimate effect ſo much deſired. The Portugueſe are, to my knowledge, at the preſent moment carrying on the trade with the enemies of this country. It was perfectly clear, that neither that nation, nor the French, Dutch, or Americans, would abandon it when opportunities, ſo much more favourable for the conduct of it, were afforded them from the reſignation of it by England; and where then would be the advantage of this meaſure to Africa, which the friends of humanity contemplated with ſo much pleaſure? At one time three hundred and twenty ſhips were engaged in this trade from the different ports of France, and one hundred and fifty were employed in it from Bourdeaux only, which was nearly treble the number in the like occupation at the ſame time from England. The colonial trade of France before the revolution in that government, was in a high ſtate of improvement, while ours was in a condition of comparative inactivity. The French Weſt India colonial trade employed 32,000 ſeamen, and ours now only engages 22,000, and never has required more. The marine power of France was indebted to its colonial trade for the degree of ſtrength it acquired, and it was this that in the year 1782 enabled the French navy to meet our own. What may be the preſent diſpoſition of France, may be collected by her preceding conduct. At the peace of Amiens France, with the greateſt avidity, ruſhed into the African trade, which, during the civil commotions under the convention, had been ſuſpended. Will ſhe not, at a time ſo peculiarly favourable as the preſent, renew the trade which ſhe had ſo unwillingly given up? It is idle to expect then, that there will be any beneficial change; the ſlaves will be carried to the French and Spaniſh colonies as before, and no one will pretend to ſay, that the negroes will be better treated by theſe needy adventurers than they have been in our own ſhips.

Sir, from all theſe views of the ſubject, I cannot avoid entering my calm proteſt againſt the adoption of a meaſure,

ſure, which muſt involve the ruin of the colonies, and endanger the exiſtence of this country."

Mr. Brown.—" As I feel the moſt lively anxiety for the public intereſt on this queſtion, and as I am in the ſituation of colonial agent of one of the oldeſt of your poſſeſſions, I hope, Sir, I may be allowed to ſtate my ſentiments upon it, and it ſeems to me to be a duty imperiouſly impoſed upon me.

" It is not my intention, Sir, to defend the trade, or to interfere with thoſe general principles of juſtice and humanity, which have been aſſumed in the courſe of the debate; nor is it my intention to juſtify it under the view of thoſe moral evils, which the circumſtances of our own government may afford. I have always conſidered the Slave Trade, as a great political evil, but it is an evil ſo interwoven with the intereſts of the country, ſo intimately blended with numerous private intereſts, upon the preſervation of which thouſands and thouſands of our fellow-ſubjects depend, that I cannot look to the abolition, without the moſt ſerious apprehenſions.

" The redreſs ſought muſt be purſued with a proper attention to the nature of the remedy to be applied, and the effect of that remedy, as connected with all theſe important objects. Contrary to what had been ſo poſitively ſtated, I do not conſider that the Slave Trade is the cauſe, but that it is the effect of ſlavery in Africa. Slavery is the incurable diſeaſe reſulting from the ingredients of her ſoil, and the circumſtance of her ſituation; the barbariſm of her inhabitants, is the conſequence of the infertility of her ſoil, and the inclemency of her ſeaſons. While other countries enjoy the means of acquiring that enlightened knowledge which a benevolent Providence has beſtowed, literature and ſcience are for ever cloſed upon the African, and according to the beſt information we can acquire, three-fourths o ther population are in a ſtate of hopeleſs ſlavery; ſlavery occaſioned by impediments beyond the controul or remedy of any extraneous government. To this condition her petty ſtates, her local inſtitutions, and the frequent recurrence of famine, have contributed; and the preſſure of want has been ſo ſevere, ſometimes, as to

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cauſe one out of three to be ſubject to ſlavery, in order to repel it. According even to the account of Mr. Parke, the proportion I have named of three-fourths of the population are in hopeleſs ſlavery, and without the means of ſubſiſtence for their augmenting numbers: the unavoidable effect has been, the famine and deſolation to which I have adverted, and a reduction of a large portion of the inhabitants to ſlavery.

" I beg leave to repeat, that I do not attempt to juſtify the trade which by this bill is propoſed to be aboliſhed, yet I may aſſert, that it has been ſanctioned by the moſt enlightened nations, that it has been conſidered by Britain as neceſſary to her ſubſtantial intereſt, and that it has been deemed, by many men who ſtand high in reputation for ſcience and virtue, not to deſerve the infamy to which in our time it has been conſigned.

" With theſe preliminary obſervations, I may be permitted to come to the practical effect of this bill, which has in view the advantage that may ariſe to Africa from the abandonment of the trade, which, however abhorrent to our feelings in this country, is ſubmitted to by free perſons, born in Africa, to reſcue themſelves from the miſeries of famine, and from the terrors of a ſanguinary death. I am of opinion, however, that the bill is incomplete to its end; I conſider that Great Britain cannot aboliſh the African trade. Great Britain has only about one-fifth of the trade, and ſhe can do no more than reſign the part of it ſhe herſelf poſſeſſes. She cannot force the general and complete abolition, by which, alone, the humanity you have in view can be carried into effect.

" How then, it may be enquired, is the project of this bill to be ſucceſsfully executed? Sir, the only way in which that great plan can be attended with the advantages propoſed, is, by giving to Africa the happy effect of civiliſation; by impreſſing upon the other nations of Europe the conviction of the injuſtice of the trade which you yourſelves entertain; by extending the influence of your opinions to introduce a ſimilarity of feeling into their minds; leading by one common voice and determination to that complete, entire, and general abolition, from which only the end can be attained.

" This,

" This, Sir, was the view of that great ſtateſman whoſe memory is ſo highly reſpected, not only in this Houſe, not only in this country, but throughout Europe, and whoſe death mankind at large have ſo much reaſon to deplore. This governed the Parliament when it paſſed an act for the regulation of the trade, laying thereby the foundation for its abolition, and affording to Europe the diſcovery of our real intentions, and carrying it into effect, by the only means we had remaining, the concurrent opinion of other nations.

" Theſe, Sir, are the chief grounds which influence my mind to decide upon the policy of rejecting this bill. But there are other views of it, immediately connected with the ſubject, which are extremely important to be detailed, yet I feel unwilling to enter upon them, ſince the opinion of this Houſe has been ſo diſtinctly declared. I cannot, however, avoid noticing the effect of this meaſure, both as it operates with regard to the property, and even to the lives of a large portion of our fellow-ſubjects. Obvious it is, that the colonies muſt ſuſtain a material injury from the non-introduction of ſlaves; and whatever plauſible arguments may be drawn from the comparative population of other countries, it is ſufficient to obſerve, that the population in the Weſt Indies cannot be maintained, or rather, that the cultivation cannot be ſupported without a continual ſupply.

" In the old iſlands, there has been an attempt to give effect to domeſtic population, and there has been an endeavour to improve the minds of this order of people by religious diſcourſes; the reſult of which has ſhewn, that regularity has been promoted, that piety has been reſpected, and yet after this mild treatment, the returns upon the table prove, that the cultivation of the iſlands cannot be preſerved without a ſucceſſive ſupply of freſh labourers from the continent of Africa. But theſe are not the only evils produced by this meaſure; there is to be taken into the account the effect upon the white population, the whole of which muſt be ultimately deſtroyed, if you remove the motive for advancement in life, the temptations to wealth, rank, and authority. Yet there is a ſtill more ſerious view, than any I have yet ſhewn. Can any man anticipate

the effect of this bill in regard to the diminution in the value of Weſt India property? I think I do not overſtate it, if I call the depreſſion 50 per cent. and is it of no conſequence to paſs an act which probably may diminiſh that claſs of property to half its preſent worth, and which certainly will produce a very conſiderable reduction? Is it of no conſequence to aſcertain the operation of ſuch a bill upon the relation of debtor and creditor? There are many perſons concerned in this trade and its dependencies under peculiar difficulties and embarraſſments; and is it of no conſequence to examine in what ſituation they ſtand, when an act is paſſing to deteriorate the value of Weſt India property to ſuch an extent, as to expoſe it daily to abſolute annihilation?

"There is another view of a moſt alarming kind, which I tremble to approach, and that is, the effect which the meaſure is likely to have upon the lives of our fellow-ſubjects. However lightly theſe appearances may be eſtimated by the noble Lord, (Howick) with great deference to him, I ſay they are the reſult of an accurate obſervation of the ſtate of thoſe colonies. The meaſure is calculated to occaſion diſaffection, and to involve your colonies in inſurrections. The ſtate of Europe ſhould teach us the danger of innovation in ſchemes of great political import, and a reverence for thoſe ancient maxims, which have been the foundation of our national happineſs. When the negroes in the Weſt Indies learn that they are not to be benefited by theſe regulations; when they learn that their ſituation is not to be ameliorated, and that on the contrary their labour is likely to be increaſed, is it not probable that diſcontents will be excited by the ſenſe of injuſtice and oppreſſion?

"Is it then, Sir, conſiſtent with any notion of ſound policy to paſs an act pregnant with ſuch a dangerous offspring? Is it prudent to give effect to thoſe revolutionary ſyſtems, to give riſe to that diſcontent, which has been the fruitful cauſe of the diſtreſſes of Europe; to admit a meaſure, bearing upon its forehead the look of realizing in your own ſubjects, thoſe revolutionary ſcenes and horrors, the very thought of which is adapted to outrage the beſt ſympathies of our nature? And what, Sir,

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is all this for? It is in itſelf a doubtful project to redreſs the calamities of Africa, which in my conception, at leaſt, is not to be benefited; as it is now, and has been, and muſt be, in a ſtate of hopeleſs ſlavery.

" Sir, I do not mean to dwell longer upon theſe conſiderations; the reaſons I have given powerfully operate on my mind, to induce me to vote againſt your leaving the chair."

Mr. BARHAM.—" I riſe, Sir, notwithſtanding what was ſaid on the laſt debate, from a ſenſe of the cruelty of this meaſure upon the planters of the Weſt India iſlands; and I confeſs, that it requires ſome courage to do ſo. The Weſt India planters have been called, Sir, hard oppreſſors of our fellow creatures, cruel taſk-maſters, and ſo barbarous that we could not be prevented from importing ſlaves, and after having done ſo, that we obliged them to work by cruel compulſion. I am aware that ſome exceptions have been made in favor of particular perſons; but for my own part, though I have received praiſes upon this ſubject from thoſe, whom we muſt all admire, and which leave behind them the moſt gratifying ſenſations; I muſt diſclaim them, when given as they have been at the expence of thoſe who deſerve them in an equal degree with myſelf. In my exertions, I have endeavoured to conduct myſelf in the way which conſcience dictates; but this wiſh has not been confined to me alone, it has been the general deſire of others, and I cannot conſent to have my caſe ſeparated from theirs. If that be a criterion of the good treatment of ſlaves, which has been laid down in this Houſe, viz. their increaſe, I fear that I muſt ſtand very low, for on one of my eſtates, though I have made no purchaſes ſince I have been in poſſeſſion of it, the ſlaves have decreaſed in number, and I challenge my honourable friend below me (Mr. Wilberforce) to offer me a ſuggeſtion which can prevent the decreaſe, which has not before occurred to my mind; for it has been the main object with me, ſince theſe eſtates came into my hands, to obviate, by every means, this diminution.

" Nothing, Sir, ſhall deter me from expreſſing my feelings upon the queſtion as it now ſtands before the Houſe; nothing ſhall deter me from ſtating in the face of this aſſembly, that they commit in open day-light an act of groſs injuſtice, by ſanctioning the bill, as it now ſtands. Whatever may be ſaid of the iniquity of the planters; however gentlemen may indulge themſelves in caſting the blame upon them, this country, and this country alone, muſt bear the guilt of the enormities which are ſaid to be committed in the colonies, for it firſt gave its licence for the traffic. This Government has pocketed, down to the laſt ſhilling, all the profits of the trade, and then they turn round on the perſons who are partners in their error; they turn round on them, and diſmiſs them to want and miſery, and loaded with reproach.

" If, indeed, this country has now diſcovered its error, is now become ſenſible of the iniquity of the trade, and is reſolved to aboliſh it, then, I think, you ſhould have addreſſed the Weſt India planters and merchants thus:— 'It is true we have inſtituted the Slave Trade; we firſt 'gave it our ſanction, and induced you to eſtabliſh your-'ſelves in unhealthy climates; but now our eyes are open, 'we are far from wiſhing that you ſhould be injured by 'the meaſure, or that you ſhould be conſidered to have 'incurred blame for what we ourſelves have promoted, 'but we call upon you now to aboliſh the trade. It is 'but juſt that you ſhould pay, in part, for what is done at 'the deſire and for the benefit of the whole, but where 'your claims are well founded, you ſhall receive compen-'ſation.'

" If that had been done, then indeed, Sir, this might have been called a ground upon which the Houſe might ſafely proceed. But what has been the language on this occaſion? Compenſation, which is a matter of ſtrict right, ought to have been held out to us as the firſt propoſition of the bill. We are now told, that no ſuch proſpect as that of compenſation can be held out to us.

" Then, Sir, as to what has been ſaid of the treatment of the Slaves in the Weſt Indies; I ſhould have imagined that having undertaken ſo great a work, gentlemen would have made it a duty to have examined minutely what was the

the real ſtate of the caſe. I will, however, give the Houſe my opinion on the ſubject, the fruit of actual obſervation, and it is this, that the ſlaves perform leſs labour, much leſs labour, are as well ſupplied with the neceſſaries of life, and are treated with as little cruelty as the lower claſſes of ſociety in this country.

" Gentlemen are extremely fond of arguing, a priori, that when power is in the hands of an individual, it muſt neceſſarily be abuſed; but I would requeſt the Gentlemen who uſe this argument, to attend to the facts with which I am acquainted. The owner of negroes reſides among perhaps hundreds of ſlaves, on the confines of woods which ſurround him on every ſide, with his life at any hour of the day, and of the night, in their power. He lives there, without a bar or a bolt to his door; and I declare, that I have never ſeen any faſtening at all but in the towns, where the outer door of a houſe may be cloſed. Now could he live, Sir, in this way, if the power which is in his hands, were executed in a tyrannical manner? It is not long ſince the Maroon war took place in Jamaica. The negroes knew perfectly well every circumſtance that was going on, and if that had been the caſe which is repreſented, is it poſſible that none of theſe Negroes ſhould have joined in that inſurrection? In the invaſion of Grenada, how contrary was the demeanor of the ſlaves to what would have been expected, if the ſuppoſed tyranny had been really exerciſed? There they were ſeen fighting by the ſides of their maſters, and afterwards willingly laying down their muſkets, and returning to their labours. How comes it, then, that men ſo honourable in their feelings, ſo little diſpoſed to think ill of their neighbours, ſo ſagacious in enquiring, and ſo cautious in judgment, ſhould be on this only occaſion ſo rath in their concluſions, ſo pre-determined in their deciſions? We have, Sir, general concluſions drawn, to decide this point from obſolete laws; and all the evidence which could really throw light upon the ſubject, is refuſed to be liſtened to, while the teſtimony of the ignorant is received. Pray permit me to mention one ſingle inſtance. We have been told, that the teſtimony to be given by a governor, is the worſt that can be obtained. Lord Balcarras was

refuſed

refuſed to be heard, becauſe the teſtimony he could give would be matter of opinion; but when we come to Lord Seaforth, the teſtimony which he gives is quoted every day againſt us, as if that alſo were not matter of opinion. I muſt here remark that there has appeared a peculiar want of information on the part of ſome of his Majeſty's miniſters, reſpecting the ſtate of things in the Weſt Indies. The noble Lord (Howick) ſaid, that the Planters might ſupply any deficiency ariſing in their labourers by greater importations of white perſons, who would be found capable of performing, not heavy labour in the ſun, but the more light and eaſy occupations. Every gentleman at all acquainted with the Weſt Indies, muſt be well aware, that labour in the ſun to a white man would be death. A European conſtitution cannot, there, bear any degree of heavy toil, and thoſe artificers who are ſent thither, are chiefly employed in inſtructing the negroes. Beſides the noble Lord ſeems not to be aware of the great diſinclination of people to go to ſo inſalubrious a country; in conſequence of which, to a common carpenter who would receive in this country half a crown a day, I pay a ſalary, in the Weſt Indies, of £200 a year, beſides his ſubſiſtence, which may amount to as much more.

"But, Sir, I will paſs over many other topics, and allude to what the noble Lord ſtated as to the objections which were made by planters in Jamaica to the employment of married overſeers. I reſided two years in Jamaica, and I never heard ſuch an objection as that made; for I never knew an overſeer who was married: but I believe that if an overſeer were married, it would be conſidered to be a matter of the greateſt advantage; becauſe it would be thought to be an advantage that we ſhould exhibit to the negroes examples of the happineſs of the married ſtate.

"I truſt, that nobody will think that I am an advocate for ſlavery. No, Sir, I feel as much as any man the force of the eloquent paſſage quoted by the honorable member on a former night. I will not put perſonal comforts in competition with that, which is our natural bleſſing; but I ſhould be glad to know, in what way I am to communicate this liberty to my ſlaves, for in order to do that, you muſt make them acquainted with the nature of an oath.

oath. Before you can even go ſo far, they muſt be of the ſame religion with ourſelves; and I am ſorry to ſay, that among them there is very little religion at all. But how am I to communicate religion? There is no man who has labored more or taken more pains to inſtil it into them; and I can aſſure Gentlemen, that it is not ſo eaſy a thing as might be ſuppoſed. I had great difficulty in perſuading any one to go over; for in this part of the world, I have not found people willing to go over to foreign countries, for a ſlight conſideration. I have made every application, that I might furniſh the negroes with inſtructors, thinking it of very little conſequence of what ſect they might be; and I have at laſt obtained men from a ſociety, whoſe labors deſerve the greateſt praiſe. I allude to the Moravian brethren. But I know from experience, that converſion by no means depends upon human exertions. I can tell Gentlemen that, to change the religion and manners of men, is often an impracticable, always a difficult taſk. By experience, we are taught how arduous an undertaking it is, to effect a change in the manners of a freeman, and much more difficult is it to alter the manners of a Slave; for when he is inſtructed, he may ſtill in appearance acquieſce, to avoid puniſhment, while the ſame opinions which he originally poſſeſſed remain fixed on his mind. To alter their habits and their religion, therefore, it is neceſſary to give them more liberty, and by doing ſo, you may, on the other hand, perhaps, counteract that object which you intend to promote.

" I am ſorry to detain the Houſe ſo long, but I felt it to be my duty, though I am a ſincere friend to the Bill, to ſtate what I have ſtated; and I will occupy no more of your time than to ſay, that I have always been a promoter of the object which the Bill has in view, and that I will ſtill perſevere to be its friend. There was a time, Sir, when this meaſure would have failed of its purpoſe, but we all muſt allow, that the caſe is now changed, and that that which, if before enacted, would have been a dead letter, or rather worſe, a law producing greater evils than thoſe it was meant to remedy, will now perform its operations, and will put an end to the Slave Trade. At the time of which I am ſpeaking every man,

all

all the planters of our iſlands, were deſirous of extending their cultivation, and the merchants had undertaken to advance large ſums upon ſpeculation. In fact, many were about to transfer themſelves to other colonies, and I do not think it would have been poſſible to have aboliſhed it then, ſuch was the general contention for lands to cultivate. But, Sir, how is the caſe now changed? At this time, the colonies, inſtead of being in a proſperous and flouriſhing ſtate, are involved in ruin, and the whole income, whatever that may be, centers in your exchequer. As for the merchants, ſo far from being induced to advance capital, they will preſs hard for the money that has been already borrowed of them, and if you aboliſh the trade, that which might have been recovered will now be completely annihilated. But if you are determined to aboliſh it, it only remains that you ſhould do it in as fair a way as poſſible; and I cannot help concurring with the Counſel who appeared on behalf of the Weſt Indies in hoping, that compenſation will be made, for the credit of the country, and that it will be done in a fair and honourable way.

"There is however one other point to which I will beg leave to advert. It behoves us in a meaſure of ſo great importance as the preſent, and which will be regarded in the event of the paſſing of the Bill as the deed of this great body, to do it, if I may uſe the expreſſion, *Suaviter in modo.* There are conſequences which might enſue to the iſlands, which would be extremely embarraſſing to this country, if, by this meaſure, you detach their affections from the mother kingdom."

Mr. COURTNEY declared himſelf a cordial friend to the meaſure now under diſcuſſion.

Sir RALPH MILBANK.—"Sir, there has been a circumſtance alluded to during the debates upon this queſtion, as a motive for poſtponing the abolition, which is, that the Planters have not had warning of the intention of this Houſe to adopt the Bill. To me, however, it is quite clear, that ſufficient notice has been given to the Iſlands,

Iſlands, of the final concluſion of the Slave Trade, when this matter has been in contemplation for about twenty years. The ſentiments expreſſed by a noble Lord on a former night, ſo fully coincide with the ſentiments which I ſhould expreſs, that it would be preſumption in me to reſtate his arguments.

" But I will juſt take the liberty of adverting to ſomething which fell from a learned Gentleman oppoſite to me (Mr. BROWN.) He ſaid, that the natives of Africa, who were brought to the Weſt Indies, were all ſlaves in their own country and in a miſerable condition. But what does that honourable Gentleman do? He brings them from Africa, their own country, to make them ſlaves in the Weſt India Iſlands, in order to ameliorate their condition; for there it is affirmed they are as well treated, clothed and fed, in every reſpect, as the labourers in this country. But can any ſtatement be more unfounded? Take an example. If a ſervant here be aſſaulted or injured by his employer, by means either of whip or ſcourge, he has it in his power to go before a magiſtrate, to bring his action againſt his maſter, and to recover damages for the cruelty inflicted upon him. But how different is the ſituation of the unhappy negro: his maſter may ill treat him with impunity, for he can receive no juſtice upon the evidence of a black man, and therefore what can you term his ſtate, but miſerable and oppreſſed?

" I will not detain the Houſe by further remarks, for this has been a ſubject which has been ſo ably diſcuſſed, that little can be added; I will therefore only ſtate, that in compliance with the wiſh of a great number of my conſtituents, in perfect coincidence with my own feelings, I hold up my voice in ſupport of the Bill. I do flatter myſelf that the period is now come, when a trade ſo inhuman and contrary to the laws of juſtice, ſhall be no longer ſuffered to exiſt a diſgrace to this country."

Mr. MONTAGUE.—" Sir, I believe I can venture to ſay, that I have ſpent more time in the inveſtigation of this ſubject than any other Member, excepting the honourable Member for the County of York. It will readily be ſuppoſed, that after this application, I poſſeſs

as much zeal as others in the attainment of the object propoſed, yet I will not enter at any length into general reaſoning, I will confine what I have to ſay, to the arguments of thoſe honourable perſons who have ſpoken on the other ſide of the queſtion.

" I do not wonder that Gentlemen ſhould be deſirous to wipe away all ſtain from the character of the planters, but to me it appears to be unneceſſary, as it has not been the practice of my honourable Friend, or of thoſe who have acted with him in this great cauſe, to affix a ſtigma to their characters. While it is perfectly true what an honourable Gentleman (Mr. BARHAM) has ſtated, that he, acting from motives of humanity, has done all he could to improve the condition of his ſlaves, this ſingle and reſpectable example would not prove that uniform attention was paid to the ſame object. The volumes upon your table exhibit many inſtances of individual cruelty, and there is abundant teſtimony that the condition of the Slaves in the Weſt Indies is much to be deplored.

" A Gentleman behind me (Mr. BROWN) has ſaid, that Africa was formed for ſlavery; indeed he ſaid, that it was almoſt impoſſible for Africa to be in any other ſtate; but does he mean to argue, that upon this account we are not to improve the condition of thoſe of her natives who are placed within our power, and that we are abſolved from all guilt in continuing to excite thoſe enormities, neceſſary to the ſupport of this trade, becauſe this is the natural condition of Africa? The argument refutes itſelf. When we know that the whole of the civilized ſtates of Europe, even that this free country which has riſen to ſuch a pre-eminence, not very long ſince was in the ſame ſtate as Africa; that in Britain herſelf, the ſelling of ſlaves was practiced at no very remote date; with this fact before us, how can we pretend to ſay that Africa is incapable of improvement?

" Some arguments of an honourable Member (Mr. HIBBERT) require only to be ſtated, in order to be confuted. Sir, at a time when Slavery was univerſal throughout the wide range of the habitable globe, we read in the Scriptures narratives which mention this condition of man;

man; and are we to be told, that on that account, we are to continue the export of 15,000 ſlaves annually from the Coaſt of Africa? Is this a fair concluſion from ſuch premiſes? I do moſt ſincerely expreſs my concern for thoſe honourable Gentlemen, who, from the accident of repreſenting particular places, or of their perſonal interest in the trade, think it neceſſary to introduce reaſoning of ſo little weight. The honourable Member to whom I laſt alluded, ſaid, that he did not underſtand the principle of Chriſtianity on which the defenders of the Abolition proceeded, when they ſpoke of the Slave Trade as inconſiſtent with the golden rule, to do as we would be done by. After the explanations that have been given by the honourable Member for Yorkſhire reſpecting the relation of the maxims of our holy religion to this important meaſure, it ſtrikes me with aſtoniſhment, that it ſhould be now aſked, if, with reſpect to the Africans, this trade is doing as we would be done by, and that the honourable Member ſhould at this day enquire what is meant by it?

"An honourable Gentleman ſaid, that he doubted if the population of the Iſlands would admit of the Abolition, and he queſtioned the validity of the arguments of a noble Lord (Howick) as to this part of the ſubject. In expreſſing the grounds of his uncertainty, we learn, that it is not the concluſions that he rejects, but the facts from which thoſe concluſions are drawn. He admits the correctneſs of the reaſoning if the premiſes are allowed. What are thoſe premiſes? They are facts brought from the Weſt Indies, founded on the authority of the Legiſlatures there. Theſe facts prove, that in the preſent ſtate of the Iſlands, the population of the negroes is ſuch, as to be nearly equal to its own ſupply. Will it not be competent to that ſupply when you have removed the grand obſtacle which keeps it down, and when you have introduced that good management which is calculated to increaſe it? Even under all the diſadvantages which it now has to encounter, it approaches to that ſtate in which we all wiſh to ſee it. But to whom is it to be attributed that theſe effects have not already taken place? I ſay plainly, to thoſe who have hitherto endeavoured to prevent the Abolition.

" Before I ſit down, I truſt I ſhall be permitted to join moſt cordially in felicitating my honourable Friend on the proſpect of at length obtaining the reward of his labours. It is however yet poſſible, that from ſome unforeſeen event, he may be diſappointed. I can only ſay that, in that caſe, no effort of mine, as long as I have conſciouſneſs in my mind, ſhall be wanting to proſecute this meaſure. This is a ſubject which lies very near my heart; and I delight in the thought, that the project will at laſt ſucceed; and I am gratified at being inſtrumental in taking away the ſtain which has ſo long reſted upon us."

Mr. BATHURST. — " Sir, my object in riſing is, to juſtify the conſiſtency of the conduct of thoſe with whom I have acted. What I aſſert is this, that the population cannot maintain itſelf, and to prove the allegation, I have only to call for the evidence of an honourable Gentleman, who himſelf votes for the Abolition (Mr. BARHAM), who tells you, that with all the care he has taken to ameliorate the condition of the ſlaves on his own eſtates, he is incapable of ſupporting the black population. Beſides, even admitting the births to exceed the burials, it is no concluſive proof of an increaſing population, and neither in the Weſt Indies, nor in any other country whatever, will the mere exceſs of the births over the deaths furniſh any ſuch concluſive proof.

" When inconſiſtency is charged upon us, it is not enough to ſay, that thoſe who are diſpoſed gradually to aboliſh the trade, are enemies to the ultimate abolition of it. They muſt deal more in argument before they can ſay deciſively, that the one meaſure is effective, and the other not. The friends of the gradual Abolition are prepared to ſhew, that the ſteps you take cannot be completely ſucceſsful; that they will give a ſudden ſhock to the prejudices of thoſe concerned in the trade; that by allowing no time for preparation, you run the riſk of not fulfilling your intention, and even of being utterly diſappointed in the attempt. The trade, it is ſaid, with great plauſibility of reaſoning, will devolve to other nations, who will proſecute it with leſs humanity. You may waſh your hands of what you call the crime; but when you

you ſpeak of the benefit to the injured Africans, you muſt take that pernicious conſequence into the account, and ſee how the balance ſtands.

" An honourable Gentleman (Mr. BARHAM) remarks, that if other planters are in the ſame ſituation in which he is placed, it will be impoſſible for them to keep up the population. What then is the reaſon that you will have the Slave Trade ſuddenly aboliſhed? The calamities of war, and the ſubverſion of commerce is ſuch, that the Colonies have not the means of obtaining ſlaves from other powers at preſent; and indeed, the diſtreſſes of the Colonies are ſuch, that if other powers could make the offer, the Colonies could not avail themſelves of it. We are not, however, to draw any permanent argument from the temporary ſtate either of the one or the other. It is true that there is at this moment a great overflow of Weſt India property in the country, and the impediments to the demand abroad, prevent its importation; yet trade in theſe commodities from the Iſlands, as in all others, will find its level, the preſent difficulties will be removed, and all you can do will not reſtrain the planters from getting ſlaves from other quarters."

Mr. JACOB.—" There was, Sir, a ſort of paroxiſm of humanity, which led the Houſe to a deciſion which I moſt heartily approve, but which rendered me doubtful if the policy of the meaſure had not been overlooked in paying attention to its juſtice and humanity. But I am now perfectly ſatisfied upon all the three points.

" It has been aſked, Why ſhould the Slave Trade be immediately aboliſhed? To this I anſwer, that the Report of the ſtate of the Weſt Indies on the table ſhews, that there is a ſuperabundance of produce; that there is even an increaſing ſuperabundance; and that if things continue in this ſtate the markets will be choaked and overloaded, and the ruin will be much more alarming than it is at preſent. Another reaſon for this meaſure is, the poſſibility of keeping up the population, which has been abundantly proved. To ſay nothing of the Iſlands of Bermuda and New-Providence, it will be found that in Montſerrat, Dominica, and Jamaica, there is not only no decreaſe,

decreaſe, but that there is an actual increaſe of population. If, then, it be admitted that the population can be kept up, it is granting every thing neceſſary for the ſanction of the meaſure.

" On an eſtate maintaining an hundred negroes at £ 50 each, you will find that they are now worth about £ 5000. The value of the lands which they cultivate may perhaps amount to £ 5000 more. But when this meaſure is paſſed, what will be the conſequence? Thoſe negroes which before were worth only £ 50 each, will be increaſed in value to double that amount. That which would be worth before £ 5000, may then be eſtimated at £ 10,000, and I aſk, is this no compenſation to the Weſt India merchants and planters? Will not the value of the Weſt India property, as far as it conſiſts in negroes, be greatly encreaſed? Under ſuch circumſtances, what will be the treatment of the ſlaves? The planter will ſee that theſe poor creatures are increaſed in value, that he muſt guard them with increaſed attention, and that he muſt feed them a little better than he has been accuſtomed to do.

" There is another reaſon for the Abolition, which I think is of conſiderable importance, and which will have ſome weight with the Houſe in deciding this queſtion. It has been always found, that the negroes, by being well treated, come to entertain an affection for their maſters; but this cannot be the caſe with newly-imported negroes. Conſidering, therefore, that the old negroes are more attached to their maſters than the new, and that thoſe which are freſh imported will be moſt willing to excite and encourage inſurrection, is it not better to bring no more of thoſe materials into the country which have been hitherto found ſo combuſtible?

" One more argument reſpecting the poſſibility of the trade being carried on by our enemies to the Coaſt of Africa. Let us ſee what is the ſtate of the different countries which we apprehend may take up the traffick. We find that France is precluded by the war from doing ſo. Sweden never did carry it on. Denmark has ceaſed to be concerned in it; and America has alſo given it up; and

and then there only remains Portugal which can poſſibly engage in it."

Mr. WINDHAM.—" My ſentiment, Sir, on the preſent queſtion muſt be, that ſlavery under every form, and in every circumſtance, is pernicious. Yet there are dangers which preſent themſelves to my mind in this meaſure, that make me pauſe, and that make it impoſſible for me to find in myſelf that courage with which ſo many honourable Members of this Houſe are provided. It ſeems to me, that this Bill may lead to the ruin of the country, and at no very diſtant period. Theſe fears may be merely imaginary, yet, not thinking myſelf under the compulſion of a ſtrict and over-ruling morality which impels me to do the thing, I dare not take this bold ſtep. I am under the apprehenſion of the conſequences which may reſult from it, and I am conſtrained to ſay, that I ſhrink from them. While others are diſpoſed to waſh their hands of what they are pleaſed to call the iniquity of the trade, I am anxious to waſh my hands of thoſe conſequences which this meaſnre may bring upon us, without, certainly, any immediate and obvious neceſſity."

Mr. WHITBREAD.—" Sir, in the preſent ſtage of the debate I ſhould not have riſen to addreſs you, if it had not been from the circumſtance of my Right Honourable Friend below me (Mr. WINDHAM) thinking it neceſſary to get up at this late period of the night, to ſtate to the Houſe, that he was a perſon who doubted the propriety of aboliſhing the African Slave Trade. If there can be a man whoſe mind is enlightened, or whoſe intelligence is acknowledged, it is he; and yet in the early period of his life, as I well remember, he ſtated in this Houſe that he regarded the abſolute neceſſity of the abolition of the Slave Trade, as one of thoſe ſelf-evident propoſitions which afforded no room for argument. So extraordinary a revolution having taken place in the ſentiments of my Right Honourable Friend, I think it the more incumbent on me to ſtate to the world, that I remain of the ſame opinion which I originally expreſſed. Not only am I ſtrengthened by what I heard the other night, but by the

ſpeech

ſpeech of the Honourable Gentleman oppoſite to me, by the addreſs of the new Member under the gallery, and by the obſervations made by my Honourable Friend near me (Mr. BARHAM), which I will venture to ſay, for the purpoſe of the abolition of the Slave Trade, was moſt effectual; and I was rejoiced to hear, that he had undertaken to bear a part of the weight of the meaſure.

" An Honourable Gentleman has told us, that he was a friend and ſupporter of a gradual abolition, but I think that we muſt either have a total abolition or no abolition; for even if they conſent that this traffic ſhall at ſome period or other be aboliſhed, as was done on a former occaſion; yet when that period ſhall come; when we tell them, 'Carry your own principles into effect,' they will ſtill exclaim, 'Give us more time.' He ſays, the Weſt India Planters have had no warning. Have they indeed had no warning? Was there not a reſolution of this Houſe paſſed for the abolition, and during the interval, was there the ſmalleſt preparation made? Sir, if you were to determine now, that in five years from this time the abolition ſhould take place, yet I aſk the Houſe if they can believe that any preparation whatever would be made? From my heart I believe none; and the only conſequence would be, that a greater glut of ſlaves would be imported, on pretence of keeping up the population; but the real object would be ſoon found to be, that they might open new grounds, that they might enter into new ſchemes of cultivation.

" A Right Honourable Gentleman has ſaid, that the population of the Weſt Indies is not now in a ſtate to meet the abolition. I ſhould like to know, if it be not now in that ſtate, when it will be? He tells you, at the ſame time, that he knows of no means by which the population in our Colonies can be kept up. 'That can never be done,' (ſays he). 'But I aſk you to wait,' he adds, 'till it is done, and then aboliſh the trade if you pleaſe.' Could any thing be ſaid ſo little worthy of that Gentleman's acuteneſs?

" The argument is ſtated, for the purpoſe of poſtponing the operation of the Bill, in two ways; Firſt you hear, that the abolition will go for nothing, and the reaſon aſ-

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ſigned for it is, that other countries will, when we have abandoned it, carry it on. We know, Sir, that America has already aboliſhed it; France can do nothing in it at preſent; and though Portugal ſtill continues it, yet do you aboliſh your part of it. You will then have done your duty; you will have ſet an example to France, and every other European ſtate, which they will do well to imitate.

" A friend of mine is of opinion, that the Houſe was run away with the other night in a whirlwind of humanity; but if I have any thing to complain of, it is, that the Houſe has been too much loaded with cold reaſoning; that the ſupporters of the Bill have been obliged to exhibit to you the meaſure as a matter of profit and loſs, between Engliſh money and African blood, (loud and continued exclamations of hear, hear, hear, interrupted the honourable Member), before they can ſatisfy the planters of the Weſt Indies that they will loſe nothing by not committing murder on their fellow men. We muſt prove to them, that though robbery and murder have been committed for a time for their benefit, yet if the iſlands ſtill produce the ſame revenue, we ſhall no longer continue a trade which is nothing more or leſs than robbery and murder; and then it is ſtated moſt correctly by my friend below me, that if you do aboliſh the trade, you do it not only upon your own judgment, on your own calculations, but on thoſe of Mr. PITT, which have never been overturned. If the ſtatement which has been made reſpecting the benefit to be derived to this country from the abolition of this trade, be correct, is it ſuppoſed, that France or other countries, if they attend neither to the calls of humanity or juſtice, will not advert to their own intereſts ſo far as to follow our example in aboliſhing it alſo?

" My honourable friends on the other ſide have all of them contended, that the ſituation of the ſlaves in the Weſt Indies is the moſt happy that can be imagined, and one of them has obſerved, that an Engliſh labourer does much more work than a negro in our colonies. Suppoſe that he does; what does that prove? It proves, that by terror or by torture, or by any other means that you can reſort to, you cannot extort from a ſlave ſo much labour

as you can obtain from a free man. But, ſays an honourable Member, the Africans are in ſuch a deplorable ſtate at home in their own country, they endure ſuch miſeries, and labour under ſuch hardſhips there, that they are glad to be relieved by being carried to the Weſt Indies. If this be the caſe, I ſhould be glad to know if they come as volunteers. Volunteers! No, Sir, they are torn from their families and connections, and what is a better proof than all is, you pay for them. But how does Jamaica ſpeak in the paſſage alluded to by an honourable friend? She calls the Slave Trade, to be ſure, a neceſſary evil; but ſhe ſays, that the regulations we have paſſed reſpecting taking no ſlaves above the age of 30 is moſt humane, becauſe it is moſt horrible to take them from their deareſt connections after that time. How different is the ſtory which Antigua relates? She tells you, that they are moſt glad to be brought there, becauſe there they are moſt happy. Next, the honourable Gentleman quotes Mr. Parke upon this ſubject, and what is moſt extraordinary, is, that that author is brought in to ſupport both ſides of the queſtion. There is one paſſage only in the travels of Mr. Parke to which I will beg leave to recall the attention of Gentlemen, in order to ſhew them, what is the uſage the ſlaves receive in the caravans, and in what manner thoſe miſerable creatures are compelled to bear it. Mr. Parke himſelf relates, that he attended one caravan where there was an unhappy woman who, being unable to proceed further, was left behind. At length thoſe who had the care of the caravan went in queſt of her, and having found her ſhe was flogged till ſhe roſe from the ground upon which ſhe had ſunk. She ſtarted forwards a little way, and again fell. She was whipped again, ſtarted up, and once more fell upon the ground. At length, tired of proceeding in this manner, the drivers put her upon a horſe, tying her hands and feet upon the animal, 'till they found her ſuch an incumbrance that they actually cut her throat, and left her behind them. This fact we have, Sir, from an eye witneſs, and there can be no doubt, that there have been ten thouſand inſtances of the ſame kind, if poſſible, more cruel than this.

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" Does not, Sir, ſuch a tale as this put an end to all the arguments of profit and loſs, and tell us in the moſt impreſſive manner, that let who will make them ſlaves, or who will buy them, we will never again have any thing to do with this deteſtable traffic? An honourable Gentleman, who has ſpoke in the courſe of this night's debate, has made ſome ſtatements, which I think could not be borne out on the philoſophical hypotheſis on which he choſe to place them. He has told us of the population of Africa, and of the maſſacres which will follow the paſſing of this bill; and to ſupport this opinion he cited a book to which I have alluded before in this House, I mean that of Mr. Malthus; in which that author is ſuppoſed to have ſaid, that Africa muſt get rid in ſome way or other of her exceſſive population: but all which Mr. Malthus aſſerts in his book is, that notwithſtanding the conſtant drain on the population of that continent, the fruit of that population is ſo great, that it is ſtill kept up; that the elaſticity of population is ſuch, that do what you will, drain it as much as you pleaſe, it will ſtill maintain itſelf.

" But the honourable Gentleman next tells us to come to the Weſt India iſlands, and ſee what the real fact is; and deſires that a Committee of Gentlemen may go over there, and then they will ſee, and be able better to judge of the ſituation of the labourers. Suppoſing this to be done, and a favourable report to be made, it would not authorize the Slave Trade; it would not juſtify our retaining the negroes there in perpetual and hopeleſs bondage. With reſpect, however, to the happineſs of the ſlaves, I will relate to the Houſe one ſtory, without meaning to inflame its paſſions, told me by a humane proprietor of a Weſt India eſtate, which of itſelf would be ſufficient to ſatisfy my mind on this ſubject. A fine ſlave, about 25 or 30 years old, was placed on the eſtate of a friend, after having been bought at the market. The man was very dejected, but it was hoped that his dejection would ſoon paſs away. Fortunately or unfortunately, however, for one knows not how to determine, another ſet of ſlaves were brought to the iſland, and ſome of them being purchaſed by the ſame owner, were introduced into

the field where this man was at work, and having looked at him, they all fell down on their knees at once, and paid homage to him as a ſovereign prince. The effect upon this man was ſo great, that in the courſe of the next twelve hours he committed ſuicide.

" But whether the ſlaves in the Weſt Indies are happy or unhappy, of this I am ſatisfied, that if a man will behave with humanity to thoſe who are in that degraded ſtate, he will receive the reward of gratitude which muſt always be conſequent upon his kind endeavours.

" One would imagine, from the language of ſome honourable Gentlemen, that on the African Slave Trade depends the exiſtence of this kingdom : but ſurely ſo abſurd a poſition cannot be ſeriouſly maintained; neither can it be ſeriouſly maintained, that if you in the preamble of your Bill ſtate that the Slave Trade is contrary to humanity, juſtice, and ſound policy, you will excite an inſurrection in the Weſt Indies. Have not the reſolutions paſſed in the laſt year, and from which the preamble is taken, been known in the Weſt Indies for a long time? and yet no inſurrection has taken place in conſequence of it. Am I then to believe becauſe you put that in the preamble of an act of Parliament, which was before only a reſolution of the two Houſes, it will make ſo prodigious a difference, as to have the effect of creating an inſurrection? Anſwer me this queſtion. Is it true that the trade is contrary to juſtice and humanity, or is it not? If it be, they need not the preamble of an act of Parliament to tell them ſo. No Sir, they know it too fatally already.

" My gallant friend has told us, that within the laſt twenty years the ſituation and treatment of the Weſt Indian negroes have been much bettered; that before indeed they were wretched, but now, they are comparatively happy. If it be ſo, Sir, I am heartily glad of it: but we have been told alſo, that laws were enacted for the protection of the ſlaves, againſt the wrongs inflicted upon them by their owners. Do we not know, however, that the laws alluded to were enacted, not by the ſlaves, but by their maſters, who not only had the formation of thoſe laws, but alſo the office of carrying them into execution;

execution: and, as has been moſt truly ſtated, all the regulations thus boaſted of have been perfectly nugatory, and were neither intended or calculated to protect the injured, or to redreſs their grievances; their only object was to miſlead the ignorant, to make a ſhew and a pretence before the face of the public, in order to delude them into a favourable opinion of Weſt Indian humanity.

" The Gentlemen on the other ſide have ſaid, why will you not permit us to call evidence to prove what we have ſtated reſpecting the dangers attendant on this meaſure? But I would aſk, Sir, Has there not been an outcry againſt the Slave Trade ever ſince and even before the French revolution; ſuch an outcry, that if the ſlaves had been diſpoſed to rebellion, we ſhould ere now have beheld the Weſt India iſlands in a ſtate of conflagration? And are we now to be told, that becauſe we ſpeak of their low and degraded ſtate, we ſhall excite their paſſions, and endanger the ſafety of our iſlands?

" Another circumſtance has likewiſe been laid hold of, which relates to a meaſure of Mr. Fox's of the laſt year, which they ſay was intended as a gradual abolition of the trade; and they adduce the ſuppoſed opinion of that great ſtateſman, to prove that ſuch a meaſure would be the moſt advantageous. That illuſtrious ſtateſman, I will venture to ſay, was of no ſuch opinion; he adopted that meaſure merely as a remedy for an evil which would otherwiſe have taken place in the Weſt Indies, in conſequence of a proſpect of an early abolition, I mean a glut of negroes.

" Sir, I can have no doubt, that an improvement of the condition of the negroes in the Weſt Indies muſt follow the abolition of this trade; and if you look to the colonies, you will ſee, that at the ſame time that you are fulfilling the dictates of humanity and juſtice, you are guarding your own intereſts, and purſuing a plan founded on the wiſeſt policy.

" An honourable friend of mine, however, ſays in contradiction to this reaſoning, that the abolition inſtead of being a relief, as is argued, to the oppreſſed negroes, will be a miſerable ſcourge to them, for they will be compelled

compelled to work the harder in conſequence of it. But I will put it to him, whether ſuppoſing he had a hundred negroes, and the mortality among them was likely to proceed (according to the ſtatement of Mr. LONG) in a ratio proportioned to the number of hogſheads of ſugar produced by their labour, he would not, under exiſting circumſtances, rather diminiſh the amount of his crop, than by enlarging it, increaſe the mortality among his ſlaves? But my friend has gone further than this, and he has told you, that notwithſtanding all the care that he could pay to his ſlaves, there has ſtill been a decreaſe among them. That may be. I could bring a part of England before the attention of the Houſe, where there is now a decreaſe in the population from the unhealthy ſituation of the place. But are there not inſtances of other eſtates in the Weſt Indies, where the population has not only been kept up, but greatly encreaſed? And there can be no doubt, that if moderately worked and well fed, the ſame effect will, on the whole, and in an average of years, be produced in the Weſt Indies as in every other country of the world.

" If honourable Members will go into arguments like thoſe to which I have now replied, it is abſolutely neceſſary that the falacy of them ſhould be detected. And to come to another part of my friend's ſpeech, I would ſay, without heſitation, that I will allow of no claim of compenſation in the firſt inſtance, becauſe it would open a door, which we might never again be able to cloſe; and the treaſury of England might not be ſufficient to ſatisfy every claimant. But, ſay they, where, and how, then, is compenſation to be made? Firſt, Sir, it is our buſineſs to make compenſation to injured and inſulted Africa, for the happineſs of which we have deprived her. (The exclamations of " hear, hear, hear," were loud and repeated.) Again, this Houſe will never allow the merchants and planters to calculate on proſpective loſſes: let us aboliſh the trade, and then they may come to the Houſe in the event of injury, and make their demand. Let them not, however, expect too much from our generoſity: they muſt not go on working their negroes as they have done, to the bone, in order that they may come to us to aſk for compenſation for the miſchiefs they themſelves have

have produced. In the preſent ſtage of the buſineſs, it is impoſſible for me to think for one moment of compenſation.

" That a gradual abolition would obviate the neceſſity of compenſation, if there exiſt any ſuch neceſſity, I cannot believe. The planters had due notice, but they would not take it; nor will they now be convinced until the act is executed, that the abolition will certainly take place. As to the claims of the Liverpool merchants, I cannot entertain a doubt reſpecting them; they can never be granted.

" I have, Sir, been highly delighted and gratified by the ſpeeches of my friends, and of the younger members of the Houſe, upon this ſubject; and I have likewiſe been much pleaſed and amuſed by the arguments employed, the miſerable arguments, againſt the abolition. I wiſh, with all my heart, that my excellent friend, Mr. W. SMITH, who has ſo long and zealouſly laboured in this noble cauſe, had now been a member of this aſſembly, that he might have had the gratification of co-operating in this great work; and I thank God, that I have lived to this day, when I can give my vote for aboliſhing this nefarious traffic, in the aſſured hope that the period of its extinction has at length arrived."

Mr. FULLER.—" I muſt acknowledge, Sir, that the ſpeech we heard from the noble Lord (HOWICK) was very eloquent; there was a vaſt deal of flouriſh in it; and we are told, Sir, that the abolition will go to make the ſlaves in the Weſt Indies labourers, ſuch as we have in England. I doubt, Sir, if it will convert ſlaves into labourers, but I am of opinion that the labour of the ſlaves muſt be increaſed by it.

" On my own eſtates, I have endeavoured to improve the condition of the ſlaves, to put them in the ſituation of labourers, to give them ſmall portions of land to conduce to their comfort, in order, if poſſible, to keep up the population. My eſtates have been under the beſt management; they have been under the direction of the chief juſtice and his brother, and they are now looked after

after by the ableſt man in the iſland; but all this has been ineffectual to increaſe the population.

" Now, Sir, what is my ſituation? The gangs of labourers on my eſtates will be reduced from time to time, until the eſtate is annihilated. Annihilated it muſt be, for is there a man who will lend me money under this riſk?

" The object has been to undermine the ſecurity of Weſt Indian property by popular clamour: the firſt ſtep is the abolition of the Slave Trade; and then will naturally follow the emancipation of the ſlaves. But will the ſlaves work if they are ſet free? No. I underſtand, that a negro who will be at the trouble of throwing ſeed out of his hand, will, by a day's labour, raiſe as much as will be ſufficient to maintain himſelf and his children for a week. Does any man ſuppoſe, that a man will, for the reſt of the week work, if he can, in this way, maintain himſelf and his family? Then the neceſſary conſequence is, that you are obliged to keep them under reſtriction.

" The cauſe of the great failure in the population is this; that at the time of taking off the crops, the ſlaves have ſo much ardent ſpirits given to them, that they are deſtroyed; and this, Sir, is from want of the proper attention in the overſeers. But is it not much the ſame here? I believe it to be the defect of the male population of this country. With reſpect to this practice in the Weſt India iſlands, I have, Sir, the experience of five generations upon my own eſtate, where I find the confirmation of it.

" Then, Sir, to ſay that the planters are to be taught humanity and all that; ſuch remarks are unfair and improper. There is no man who reverences Parliament more than I do. It is the jury of this country. It is the fitteſt inſtrument which can be employed for its happineſs. But if uſed wrong, it is the worſt inſtrument which can be employed; the moſt dreadful inſtrument to diſtreſs a people that can be conceived.

" An honourable Gentleman (Mr. WHITBREAD) tells you a parcel of fine ſtories, and talks of honour and juſtice, and morality, and all that; but I do not myſelf think it neceſſary to carry theſe refinements ſo far. If we were to do ſo on every ſubject, there is nothing between man

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and man that we ſhould not condemn. Thus in his brewery, puſh it to the utmoſt extent, and we ſhould have a great deal of lamentation on the injury done by bad mixtures; we ſhould be told, that we are conſtantly drinking poiſon, that the population of the country was thinned by it, that the buſineſs of a brewery was a ſort of legalized murder, and I might forewarn my countrymen of their danger, proclaim all the evils, and aboliſh beer as an Engliſh beverage. Sir, we have been entertained with nice feelings, with a vaſt deal of ſympathy and ſuch ſort of ſtuff, but before we apply them we ſhould find proper objects to which they ſhould be directed."

(Mr. FULLER ſat down amid inceſſant cries for the queſtion.)

Mr. HERBERT (of Kerry.)—" Sir, fervent as I am in ſupport of this meaſure, and convinced as I am of its propriety, I am glad to be able to ſtate, that it is not from motives of humanity and juſtice alone that I mean to give my ſupport to the abolition. I am ready to ſtate, and I do really believe after all I have heard from honourable members who have ſupported the other ſide of the queſtion, and from the noble Lord, that the Bill will be a ſource of great advantage to the Weſt Indies, and that the proprietors of eſtates there, cannot loſe by it, or be by any means injured.

" The trade itſelf is unjuſt, and contrary to the religion on which our laws are founded; and on thoſe laws alone could it be ſupported, for if you have no authority under thoſe laws, it is illegal to detain men in ſlavery. Thinking, therefore, as I do, that the abolition is founded on the broad baſis of juſtice, and that juſtice having been conſulted in this bill, even were we proceeding contrary to what prudence (if that alone were conſulted) would dictate, we have no reaſon why we ſhould conſult policy.

" For theſe reaſons, Sir, I ſhall give my hearty vote in favour of the bill under conſideration."

Lord HOWICK.—" Feeling the length to which the debate has gone, and ſeeing the diſpoſition of the Houſe not

to proceed further, I ſhall reſerve what I have to ſay to ſome future opportunity, particularly in anſwer to my right honourable friend (Mr. WINDHAM,) who tells us, that we are accompliſhing the ruin of the country by this meaſure. I ſhall content myſelf by juſt obſerving at this time, in reply to my right honourable friend, that after the beſt attention I can give to the queſtion, diveſting myſelf as much as poſſible of all impreſſions as to the horrors of the trade, and of the compaſſion they cannot fail to inſpire, on the grounds of expedience alone, I have convinced myſelf of the propriety of the abolition, and I have already ſtated ſome of the reaſons which lead me to think, that no ſuch dangers as engage the fears of my right honourable friend are to be apprehended, either for the commercial wealth, or political importance of this country. Sir, I have been taught to ſuppoſe, and I ſee no reaſon to diſregard ſuch inſtructions, that the true foundation of greatneſs and proſperity, is in juſtice and humanity.

" I roſe principally, before we went into the committee, to propoſe to the Houſe, a convenient mode of proceeding. This debate has taken place rather unexpectedly. After the manner in which the former queſtion was carried, I certainly did not imagine that a regular oppoſition would have been made to your leaving the chair. All the objections might therefore have been ſubmitted at a ſubſequent ſtage to the committee in the form of amendments, and this diſcuſſion might have been ſpared. I am afraid, that at the preſent late hour, and eſpecially as we hear that there is a further alteration to be propoſed in the committee as to the queſtion of time, I ſay I am afraid, Sir, that we could not make much progreſs to night. What I propoſe, then is, that if there ſhould not be any further oppoſition to your leaving the chair, we ſhould now go forward into the committee pro formâ. I ſhall afterwards move for re-printing the bill, and for its re-commitment, that the full means of diſcuſſion may be afforded, and that ſuch gentlemen who have amendments to propoſe, may have the full opportunity of diſcuſſion."

The SPEAKER.—" The queſtion is, that I now leave the chair ?"

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This being agreed to, the Houſe immediately went into the committee, Mr. HOBHOUSE in the chair. The bill then went pro formâ through the Committee, and the Houſe being reſumed, the Report was received and read; and it was agreed that the bill be taken into further conſideration on a future day, and that it be printed as amended.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 1807.

On the motion of Lord HOWICK, the Houſe reſolved itſelf into a Committee on the Bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, Mr. HOBHOUSE in the chair.

Sir CHARLES POLE.—" Impreſſed as I am with the evils which muſt attend this meaſure, the Houſe will indulge me with a few words. I conceive, Sir, that this Bill is ruinous to the country, is deſtructive to the colonies, and involves in it the ſacrifice of all our intereſts. I know that the honourable perſons, poſſeſſing great talents, who have brought this bill before us, would not have recommended it to Parliament, if they had not entertained very different opinions from thoſe I profeſs. Believing that any protraction of this trade will be productive of ſome beneficial effect, I mean to propoſe a prolongation of the interval before its adoption.

" I believe no man has ventured to ſay, that the culture of the colonies can be maintained in its preſent ſtate by the preſent population of the iſlands. I muſt ſuppoſe alſo, that every man in the Houſe, and in the country, is diſpoſed to preſerve to us our colonies and our commerce, from a conviction, that in the preſent criſis, without theſe we could not ſubſiſt as an independent nation. Without theſe, we can have no navy, and without a navy, we can have no protection. Believing then, moſt firmly, that the colonies cannot exiſt without freſh ſupplies of labourers, and that theſe cannot be procured without the Slave Trade, I come here, Sir, not for the ſake of the planters, not for the intereſt of the merchants,

not for the advantage of the manufacturers, but for the ſecurity of this country. With the delay I would ſuggeſt, I have in view ſeveral concurrent regulations; ſuch as introducing more females into the ſettlements, and promoting this object by a tax upon males, and various other arrangements auxiliary to the population.

" I could wiſh, indeed, to be relieved from the bill entirely, but I know that to be impoſſible, and therefore I endeavour to apply a partial remedy. Why do I ſo ſtrenuouſly reſiſt this bill? Becauſe I am confident, not only that you reſign the colonies by enacting it, but that you transfer them into the hands of the enemy, and you give to him a trade much more advantageous, than any in which he has been ever engaged;—a trade which, if we may judge by paſt experience, will employ a vaſt number of ſhips and ſailors.

" It is, Sir, idle to ſuppoſe, that by any expedients to which we can reſort, the abolition of the Slave Trade can be effected. You may prohibit your own ſhips from embarking in the trade, but you cannot prevent the continuance of it by the ſhips of other nations, nor can you hinder the introduction of ſlaves into your own iſlands. The enemy can with convenience bring his ſlaves to Martinique, from thence they may be conveyed to Barbadoes, and ſo to the reſt of the iſlands; and it is not even pretended that you can legiſlate for the colonies.

" This will not only be a moſt beneficial trade for France, but it will appear to your iſlands, that they do not receive that protection to which they are entitled. I do not ſay that this will be a juſt view, but it will be unavoidable. The projectors of this bill have not contemplated the dreadful viciſſitudes to which theſe iſlands are expoſed, and which render it impoſſible to ſupport the population by the ordinary means in other countries. I allude to the frequent hurricanes, by one of which in 1785, no fewer than 18,000 perſons are ſaid to have been ſwept away. If this bill paſs into a law, and a like calamity be repeated, how is it poſſible that the deficiency of labourers can be ſupplied?

" There are many other points which preſs upon my attention, but which I reluctantly paſs over. I ſhall con-

" clude

clude with moving, that the date 1812 be ſubſtituted for 1807."

The SPEAKER.—" The queſtion is this, That the words propoſed to be left out, do ſtand part of this bill."

Mr. WARD.—" Sir, conſidering that this is the only time when I ſhall have an opportunity of addreſſing you on this momentous ſubject, I truſt that I ſhall be excuſed for treſpaſſing upon the Houſe for a few moments. The queſtions which ariſe upon the bill, reſpect the inhumanity and impolicy of the Slave Trade. On the former, ſo ſtrong a caſe has been made out, that it is almoſt unneceſſary to add any thing; and with regard to the latter, even if I were convinced that the argument of humanity was groundleſs, yet I ſhould think myſelf bound to put a period to it on the ſcore of policy, as I would in caſes of robbery, piracy, or other crimes.

" We are aſked to continue the trade for five years longer, but is not this to continue it for an indefinite period? I conceive that there is no argument which can apply to its continuance for five years, which may not at the end of that term with equal propriety be adduced to ſupport its continuance for ever. That caſes of individual hardſhips may occur, I am far from diſputing, eſpecially, when the object of this bill is to aboliſh, not to regulate a widely extended evil; but that merchants and planters will be great ſufferers does not appear at all probable, from any thing which I have heard or read.

" The two principal arguments urged in oppoſition to this meaſure, are, 1ſt, the depopulation of the iſlands; and, 2d, the diminution of the culture. Upon the firſt of theſe heads we know, that the population in one of the largeſt of our Weſt India poſſeſſions nearly maintains itſelf; and as the inequality exiſting between the births and deaths has gone on decreaſing (as we learn from the evidence on the table) for many years, I cannot doubt that the beneficial effects of this meaſure will be apparent in an increaſe of the population. Indeed, ſo implicitly do I rely on the powerful workings of ſelf-intereſt in the minds of the owners of land in our colonies, that I ſhall be

be much disappointed, if, not only any old plantations are ultimately abandoned, but if new lands in the course of time are not brought into state of cultivation.

" It is a fact which needs no evidence to support it, that the human race is prevented by nothing but ill treatment from multiplying as fast in the West Indies as in every other country where the bounty of nature is not cramped by mischievous institutions. It is said, however, Sir, that the West Indies form an exception to this general law, and it is urged, that in future it will be impossible to obtain a supply of labourers for opening and cultivating new lands. To this I can only say, that the progress of the colonial system must be governed by the same circumstances which controul agriculture in other parts of the world. The advance may be slower, but I trust that it will be as sure, and in the end more beneficial.

" Another argument as to the discontent likely to be excited by the passing of this bill I cannot comprehend. Is it necessary, in order to keep slaves in a state of subjection, that you should (as it is said) gratify their eyes by new importations of their miserable brethren? If that were to be really the case, what would be the state of those plantations, (and we know that there are some such) where, of late years, there have been no importations at all, and where the slaves belonging to them have not been consoled and comforted in their servitude by witnessing the superior degree of misery and wretchedness of their countrymen. This, Sir, is an argument to me incomprehensible, and it is truly surprising that the opposers of this measure should have adduced it, only to be completely confuted.

" It is likewise said, Sir, that by abolishing the trade without declaring its inhumanity, we should rectify the injustice of it. I can never believe, that when you have begun by tearing the African by fraud and violence from his native country, that it needs an act of the legislature to inform him that it is done by the violation of all justice. Why may they not at length learn, that their lives and labours have become more important in the eye of the imperial legislature, and that more regard will be paid henceforward to their health and comfort? If the predicted mis-

chiefs

chiefs were in reality to be dreaded, I fear that they would have been already felt by the planters, for the injuſtice of the ſervitude in which the negroes have been held might not only have been learnt by the peruſal of the debates upon the ſubject in this Houſe, but it might have been known, by the inſpection of the Engliſh ſtatute book, where ſlavery is regarded with the utmoſt abhorrence. But there is another ſource which might alſo have inſtructed the blacks, that the bondage under which they have groaned is contrary to the principles of juſtice and humanity. The hiſtory of St. Domingo might have already convinced them of this truth. All that can be known upon that queſtion they are already well acquainted with; and it only remains for us to decide, whether the conſolation they are ſuppoſed to derive from ſeeing their fellow countrymen tortured before their eyes, forms a balance to the turbulent diſpoſition of freſh negroes, whoſe untamed paſſions and unbroken tempers are exaſperated by the means which have been employed to drag them from their native land.

" Theſe, Sir, are reaſons which apply as well to the total abolition of ſlavery, as to the termination of this trade. And if I did not believe that this meaſure would ultimately tend to the emancipation of the negroes, I ſhould be inclined to oppoſe it as an improper compromiſe between the Britiſh parliament and the Weſt India planters."

Sir PHILIP FRANCIS.—" The honourable Baronet, Sir, in the courſe of his ſpeech, has gone over moſt of the topics which have been repeatedly conſidered in theſe diſcuſſions. He ſays, among other things, that the abolition of the Slave Trade will be injurious to the navy of this country, and that it will transfer to the navy of France a great acceſſion of ſtrength. With regard to the Britiſh navy, according to my view of the ſubject, ſo far from being aſſiſted by the African trade, it is, on the contrary, materially conducive to the reduction of its power, on account of the number of ſeamen who periſh in the courſe of the protracted voyage to the coaſt of Africa and thence to the Weſt Indies. The effect, upon the health and vigour of the mariners, may be collected from the

reluctance

reluctance with which the officers of his Majeſty's navy admit recruits from the ſhips engaged in this trade. If this be a correct repreſentation, no diſadvantage like that ſuppoſed will ariſe, and the removal of the trade to France will be no objection as between navy and navy. For my part, I would conſent, that the whole navy of France ſhould be employed in this very trade, becauſe I think that by theſe means we ſhould moſt certainly preſerve our ſuperiority.

" Let the abolition of the Slave Trade have what effect it may, it cannot, on the argument of the honourable Baronet, become the ruin of the iſlands; for he himſelf tells you, that it is impoſſible for this country to complete ſuch abolition. Then the queſtion with him is, not whether the iſlands are to receive no ſlaves at all, but whether they are to obtain them from the French, the Dutch, or ſome other continental power; and this is all the honourable Baronet is entitled to upon his own ſhewing. The colonies cannot be ruined on his principle, becauſe the trade cannot be aboliſhed.

" With the ſame inconſiſtency the deſtruction of St. Domingo has been attributed to inefficient cauſes. The real cauſe of the ruin of St. Domingo was, the power given to individuals to augment the population of the blacks indefinitely above the whites, and while this promoted the immediate profit of the planter, it involved a great public evil. This power was indiſcreetly given to individuals, and has been followed by a ſerious national calamity.

" Sir, I have ſat here above twenty, I belive near thirty years, and have liſtened during that time with attention to the debates on this important ſubject. It has been diſcuſſed here I think for twenty years, and forſooth we are now to be told of hurry and precipitation. After twenty years, to avoid what is called impolitic haſte, we are to give five years more to the trade. The object of this delay, the honourable Baronet ſays, is to give time for a large importation of females. With all the admonitions the planters have had, have not they taken care of this which now they pretend to be ſo material? Did they never think of it before, and is it reaſonable they

ſhould

ſhould aſk for it now? If it has not been done already, how can we expect they will take the precaution now, after having neglected it for twenty years? When they are prepared to give us ſome ſecurity for their future punctuality as to this particular, we may think it worth while to give an anſwer to the objection."

Mr. FULLER."—" Sir, I underſtand that the eſtate belonging to the father of the gentleman on the other ſide, (Mr. WARD) is ſuch, that the negroes cannot mix or aſſociate with other negroes, and that on that account perhaps or ſome other, they keep up their population. Whether that effect be owing to ſuperior management I do not know, but if it be, I ſhould be glad to hear of it from the honourable member, that the population may alſo be maintained on other plantations. I ſhould firſt wiſh to enquire, is it not a coffee plantation?

[In reply to this queſtion (Mr. WARD) anſwered in the negative.]

" Sir, I have always underſtood, that the honourable member's father's plantation was under peculiar circumſtances, and that there was no neceſſity for the negroes going to market, which is moſt injurious to their health and morals. If he will mention the real ſtate of it, it will be doing the country a great ſervice, and I ſhall be glad, for one, to hear it, becauſe then I ſhall know what have been the means which have ſucceeded in this inſtance to keep up population.

" Sir, that honourable member ridiculed the idea of the negroes deriving pleaſure from the freſh introduction of ſlaves; but the reaſon of their joy is this; that when they ſee no freſh importations they know that they muſt work harder and harder until others come to relieve them. As a proof that the ſlaves do not think their ſtate miſerable, I have heard that the greateſt incitement to an obſtinate negro to go more willingly about his work is, to tell him that he ſhall be ſent back again to his own country. Is it to be ſuppoſed, that if he be in that miſerable condition in which he is repreſented to be in the Weſt Indies, he would refuſe to return to that country from which he is ſaid to have been ſo barbarouſly dragged? I

recollect an inſtance of this, where I ſent word that a ſlave ſhould be tranſported back to Africa, as I was reſolved to make an example of him at any expence, becauſe he had ſtolen ſome of my cattle. The man upon hearing this, under the dread of being ſent to the place from which he had been taken, promiſed not to repeat his offence, and after that I loſt no more cattle.

"Sir, we have heard a great deal of the importation of freſh negroes, but I am certain that the iſlands cannot keep up their population. Even on my eſtate the numbers annually decreaſe. I muſt therefore give my diſſent to the bill."

General Vyse.—"On the reſult of the preſent queſtion, Sir, may depend the eternal happineſs or miſery of England, and I cannot tell how thoſe who oppoſe this bill, can ſatisfy their conſciences in ſhutting the gates of mercy on mankind. How can ſuch men retire to reſt, or call upon the ſacred name of the beneficent Deity? I declare, that I had rather have been the original propoſer of the preſent meaſure, than now be in poſſeſſion of every worldly good which fortune could beſtow. The reward to which the honourable member (Mr. Wilberforce) looks, who has ſo long devoted his time and his talents to this glorious cauſe, is not of that kind; he is now happy in this virtuous triumph, and I will not compliment him, yet I may utter a wiſh, that he may long continue to enlighten mankind, and to improve the condition of this country, by his influence and example. Poſſeſſing ſuch extenſive views, endowed with ſuch ample powers of reaſoning, it is not wonderful if he has ultimately ſucceeded. Little can now be added to the arguments employed, and eſpecially when we recollect that the eloquence of thoſe exalted ſtateſmen, Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt were employed in bringing this queſtion before their country;—men, who never ſpoke in this Houſe, but fixed attention watched their lips.

"Sir, the reſult of this meaſure is to hold out the Britiſh Senate to nations yet unborn, either as the friend of humanity and juſtice, or as the abettor of violence, ſlavery, and murder. It is indeed a ſubject of anxious

enquiry,

enquiry, yet it has been ſo much diſcuſſed, that human reaſon can do no more. I would then ſeriouſly call the Houſe to a view of its preſent ſituation. We are in that ſtate, that any temporizing reſolutions would not only expoſe us to the contempt of the world, but would increaſe the preſſure of the miſeries under which we labour. The end to be attained can only be accompliſhed by an immediate, and not by a gradual abolition.

" Whether we look to juſtice, to policy, to humanity, to profit, or to expediency, all theſe ſupply arguments favourable to an immediate abolition of the trade.

" That eminent ſtateſman, whoſe labours have been directed to this ſubject for upwards of twenty years (Mr. WILBERFORCE), who is not more diſtinguiſhed for the accuracy of his judgment, than for that zeal and perſeverance with which virtue ever engages in a great and good cauſe; I ſay, Sir, he has inconteſtibly proved from the moſt authentic documents, that this miſerable traffic is not leſs fatal to the colonies, than it is deſtructive of civilization in Africa. From the ſame authority we learn, that the property of the planters is mortgaged to a mercenary ſet of men who would ſee your iſlands ſink to the bottom of the ocean for the ſake of their profits. I do not at all wonder at the incredulity with which an honourable Gentleman (Mr. FULLER) hears the ſtatements, ſince he has no experience to correct his judgment; he has never ſeen the Weſt Indies, and probably his father and his grandfather have been equally ignorant of them. While he is enjoying the luxuries of his affluent revenue, he knows not by what horrid means they are ſupplied; and hence he may talk of the pernicious diſproportion of the ſexes, and of the progreſſive diminution of the black population. But if this meaſure be not taken, with all his confidence at the preſent moment, he may ſoon be reluctantly taught, that the loſs of his property is but the natural and neceſſary conſequence of his own ignorance and inattention.

" I have had the honour of being acquainted with many Weſt India proprietors, for whom I ſhall ever entertain the higheſt reſpect. They are men whoſe knowledge and judgment might ſtand in competition with thoſe

of the beſt-informed men; but whatever may be their ability, whatever their humanity, they unavoidably delegate their authority to others, and they know not how it is employed. Even diſtance alone is ſufficient to prevent that compaſſion, which they would otherwiſe indulge.

" If we conſider the queſtion before the committee, merely as a queſtion of policy or profit, I think we ſhould inevitably be led to the ſame concluſion, as that which is dictated by humanity and mercy.

" I have now delivered my opinion, and it remains for me only to exhort this committee, to conſider for a moment what may be the result of their determination.

" Let us enquire what are the advantages we gain on the one ſide, and what are the loſſes to which we are expoſed on the other; and in the firſt place, let us enjoy the God-like ſatisfaction of reſtoring, to the rank of human beings, the numerous inhabitants of a widely extended region, and of introducing among them moral improvement, philoſophy and ſcience, ſo as to bring them on a level with more poliſhed nations, and finally lead to the eſtabliſhment of that mild religion, to which we owe all the happineſs we enjoy here, and through which, we look for eternal happineſs hereafter.

" Whatever may be the deciſion of this night, I am perſuaded that the day is not far off, when the Slave Trade muſt be aboliſhed. The only queſtion therefore is, whether the Britiſh Senate ſhall be the foremoſt in this race of glory, or whether it ſhall withhold its tardy ſuffrage, until neceſſity ſhall wring from it its aſſent, without the pride and dignity of generous action? Let us remember, that thoſe who are the firſt to depart from evil among their companions, have the higheſt claim to future advantage, and I truſt, Sir, that the virtuous example afforded by this country, will produce that general acquieſcence which will render ſuffering and miſery, from this cauſe, no longer neceſſary."

Sir THOMAS TURTON.—" I ſhall not, Sir, take up much of the time of the Houſe in delivering the ſentiments

ments I entertain upon this ſubject, and I beg leave to aſſure honourable members, that it is no popular clamour in favor of this bill, or promiſes previously made to my conſtituents, which have at all influenced my opinion; I offer but the ſentiments I always have expreſſed. Whenever, Sir, the oppreſſed knock at the door, it will find me willing to aſſiſt them, and to give them every aid in my power to protect them againſt tyranny. If we conſider the trade, what can we call it but a traffic in human fleſh and blood, and ſo deſignating it, it is impoſſible for us to ceaſe ſtating the horror which we muſt feel againſt it.

" Two points have been urged in oppoſition to the queſtion before the Houſe. Firſt, it is ſaid, that if we abandon the trade, we ſhall throw it, with all its benefits, into the hands of the enemy; and, ſecondly, that we ſhould be doing injuſtice on the one hand, while we render juſtice on the other. As to the firſt argument, I agree that it may, in ſome degree, throw into the hands of the French the trade which we reject. Much good may it do them; but from the experience we have had, I think we ſhould not borrow from them our code of humanity. It is likewiſe ſaid, that the abolition of the African trade may occaſion a peace with France. If that ſhould be a conſequence of it, I ſhould think it an additional reaſon for the Houſe giving ist ſanction to the bill; but if the meaſure of the iniquity of France is not yet heaped up to the brim, let them endavour to fill it as they can, by accuſtoming themſelves to the horrid practices which we are about to resign. That this will be the effect of the abolition of the trade with reſpect to France, I cannot conceive; in my opinion, the preſent ſituation of that empire, is of all others, the very argument we can beſt employ to convince ourſelves, that this is the proper time for effecting the object of the bill; for has ſhe a ſhip, or even a cock-boat, that ſhe can ſend out on any trade, much leſs, upon a ſpeculation ſuch as that of the traffic from the coaſt of Africa to the Weſt Indies?

" With reſpect to the other point which has been mentioned,

mentioned, I mean with regard to compenſation, I differ from ſome honourable gentlemen, for I ſhould imagine, that if there be a caſe made out after all the warning that has been given, if it can be proved, that that warning was not ſufficient, and that all human endeavors could not avert the conſequences which may reſult from the preſent meaſure, then there would be a ground for fair compenſation. That queſtion, however, is not to interfere with this bill, for we can permit no private intereſt to claſh with the great principle upon which we are called to decide in the name of ſuffering humanity, and neglected juſtice.

" With reſpect to the honourable Baronet's motion, I think it would be folly to entertain an idea of the propoſed extenſion, after what has already paſſed. Let it be recollected, that a direct notice of the preſent meaſure was given laſt ſeſſion, when we reſolved that it was expedient that the Slave Trade ſhould be aboliſhed, and I cannot, under all the circumſtances, agree with the honourable Baronet, that there is any ground upon which his motion can be reſted.

It remains for me now only to congratulate the Houſe, and the country in general, that ſo ſpeedy a termination is about to be put to the traffic, and I will, if that honorable gentleman will permit me, congratulate him alſo on the happy concluſion of his benevolent labours; for indeed it required no ſmall exertion to counteract the effects of thoſe private intereſts, which ſtood oppoſed to him, and I cannot help conſidering it as a proud thing for the kingdom, that his perſeverance has produced ſo unexpected and glorious a reſult."

Mr. HILEY ADDINGTON.—" I have been anxious, ſince the cloſe of the laſt debate on this ſubject, to prevent any miſunderſtanding with regard to my ſentiments. On that occaſion I took the liberty of ſtating, that it was on one ground only I could oppoſe this meaſure, and I intended to propoſe the amendment, which has now been moved by my honourable friend (SIR CHARLES POLE.)

" I ſhall not take up the time of the committee in explaining

plaining the conſiſtency of my proceeding, becauſe it is in this ſtage, and in this ſtage only, that this amendment could have been moved. Neither ſhall I detain the Houſe, by entering into a general view of the ſubject.

" I beg leave to remind the Houſe, of the line of argument purſued on a former night by my right honourable friend, (Mr. BATHURST) who wiſhed to make this bill the inſtrument of carrying into effect the meaſure of abolition, under certain reſtrictions. He alſo took notice of other auxiliary means to which he attached equal importance, and to which I attach more importance than to the preſent amendment. The meaſures to which I have juſt adverted, I will explain, and I think the individual, who has recommended them to Parliament, muſt be acknowledged to be as ſincere a friend to the abolition of the Slave Trade, as any gentleman in this Houſe.

" One propoſal was, that the bill of laſt year ſhould be made a permanent meaſure; that is, that the reſtrictions of two years ſhould be taken off, and that no new ſhips, or new owners of ſhips, ſhould be admitted into the trade; and I think it would be impoſſible for any one to contend, but that this ſingle expedient would wear out the trade.

" But what elſe did he ſuggeſt? It was another diſtinct plan contributing to the ſame object, and it was this: to paſs an act, impoſing annually increaſed duties upon the importation of ſlaves.

" Theſe two meaſures, I do not know whether he pledged himſelf to bring forward, but if the amendment ſhould be carried, I am ready to pledge myſelf to do ſo.

" But they ſay, " Have you not been trying to effect the gradual abolition, and yet the Slave Trade is continued?" But I maintain that as yet, no meaſure, ſtrictly and excluſively for the gradual abolition of the trade, has been brought into the Houſe.

" The amendment now under conſideration would, if it were propoſed as a ſubſtantive meaſure, be liable to many objections. It was ſtated, on an occaſion of the ſame kind, as early as the year 1792, that during the interval

interval between the time when the amendment ſhould be adopted, and the period beyond which the trade was not to be allowed to exiſt, the planters would import ſlaves in much larger numbers, and thus the evil would in fact, during that time, be increaſed. But the Houſe will ſee, by an auxiliary plan of gradually limiting the tonnage, the objection would be completely removed, and a period would be certainly fixed, beyond which the trade could not continue, and during the approach of which, the importation of ſlaves muſt gradually decreaſe.

" I underſtand, that the bill recommended to the attention of the Houſe with ſo much ability, is meant to enforce upon the planters the neceſſity of carrying into effect ſuch humane regulations, as will occaſion the increaſe of the population. I think other meaſures might be adopted, which would anſwer the ſame end. In the year 1802, after the treaty of peace had been concluded, a noble perſon, (LORD SIDMOUTH) who then held a high ſituation in His Majeſty's councils, with this view, gave diſtinct notice to the Houſe, that he ſhould, early in the enſuing ſeſſion, move for a committee to examine into the ſtate of ſlavery in the Weſt-Indies. This notice he could not act up to by the commencement of the year; but there is a propoſition which I will ſubmit to the Houſe, and it is this, that a parliamentary commiſſion ſhould be ſent to the Weſt Indies with the ſame view.

" Thoſe who have taken the trouble to wade through the maſs of evidence on the table of the Houſe, beginning with that before the Privy Council in 1788, muſt agree with me, that the evidence is throughout contradictory, not only as to matters of opinion, but as to matters of fact. Subſequent to that teſtimony, various alterations muſt have taken place in the iſlands, and yet no evidence has been received as to their preſent condition. Hence, Sir, we are going to work in the dark; and I ſay, that a parliamentary commiſſion ſhould have been ſent out to the Weſt Indies, conſiſting of four or five individuals, of great talent and conſequence, who ſhould inveſtigate all the details of any importance affecting thoſe colonies, and who ſhould be directed to make their report to the Houſe,

with

with ſuch regulations, as it might occur to their wiſdom to recommend. Theſe gentlemen would perceive, that whatever was uſeful in one iſland, would probably be beneficial in every other, as to matter of general policy. Such a report, when received, could be referred to a ſelect committee, which ſelect committee would make a further report, and it is very likely, that the legiſlature would give its authority to ſuch regulations, as ſhould be introduced under this ſanction to its notice. Such a proceeding would be ultimately effectual, and the end would be attained with tranquility; whereas now, by paſt experience we know, that without force, more precipitate regulations cannot be carried into effect. In addition to the general meaſure, the governors ſhould be directed to inform the council of each iſland, that if the orders, under ſuch authority, ſhould not be complied with, all importations of ſlaves would be prohibited, excepting under very peculiar circumſtances.

"I ſhould think, Sir, that ſuch a plan of proceeding would ſo completely attract the attention of the planters to all the means of improvement, as to fulfil every beneficial deſign explained by the noble Lord (HOWICK) when he ſubmitted this bill to the conſideration of the Houſe.

I ſhall only add, that my humble view of the ſubject, the Houſe will give me credit for ſtating on public grounds only, unembarraſſed by perſonal conſideration, or party motives. I find myſelf, on this occaſion, unhappily differing in opinion from thoſe on both ſides of the Houſe, for whoſe ſentiments I have great reſpect, and to whom I am moſt ſincerely attached. What I have ſuggeſted, appears to me the only effectual means of avoiding all the evils which are apprehended from this new mode of proceeding. It would be more advantageous even to Africa; it would give time for the wars which afflict that country gradually to ſubſide; and it would give time for the moral improvement of the inhabitants of that continent, if indeed they are capable of civilization. It would give time for the Britiſh capitals, engaged in this trade, to be diverted to other purpoſes. You would retain in your own hands all the power of completing the humane regulations you contemplate.

Above all, it would have the effect of avoiding that convulſion ſo unfavourable to the intereſts of the colonies, both from the change in the minds of the planters, and from the ſpirit of inſurrection to be feared among the negroes; and by ſúch expedients we ſhould not be nominally, but actually, laying the foundation for the extinction of this trade."

Mr. WHITBREAD.—" Sir, having had an opportunity of delivering my ſentiments upon this queſtion on a former night at large, it would ill become me to treſpaſs on the time of the Houſe. Sir, I cannot help congratulating honourable members upon the ſpeeches of the gentlemen who have preceded me. There are two claſſes of perſons who profeſs their intention of ſupporting the motion of the honourable Baronet; the one are thoſe who are decided enemies of the abolition at all times; and the other its decided friends, but who raiſe objections to the mode in which we mean to carry it into effect; and I cannot for my life conceive, how thoſe gentlemen who are the friends of the abolition, can make themſelves ſuch dupes as to be miſled on this queſtion. There is one honourable member, who to-night cannot be conſidered to come with a crude propoſition, becauſe the ſame opinion was delivered by a right honourable relation of his ſome years ſince, and which was ſupported in the Houſe by the gentleman himſelf. As an anſwer to what he has ſtated, I will refer him to the gallant Admiral, who will tell him, that the meaſure we are deſired to adopt would be entirely ineffectual; not to mention the barbarity of the procraſtinating method recommended, of ſending commiſſioners over to the Weſt Indies, who ſhould travel over the iſlands in order to make enquiries; who ſhould come back after a ſeries of years, and appear before the committee to report what they had ſeen; and which committee, not having witneſſed thoſe things themſelves, ſhould decide if they had or had not correctly reported. After that, the Houſe muſt come to ſome reſolutions which muſt neceſſarily be ſent to the governors of the iſlands, and if they did not agree to carry them into effect, it would ſtill be neceſſary to paſs a law to enforce them.

" Next we are told by the ſame honourable gentleman, " I would adviſe you to make the bill, which the Parliament paſſed in the laſt year, perpetual, for if you do, the Slave Trade will by degrees wear out." If we do this, the honourable member's friends will come to me preſently, and tell me, " To be ſure the trade is wearing out, but our eſtates are wearing out alſo, and therefore pray repeal the bill, for if the iſlands cannot ſupport their population, you muſt repeal the bill." What does the honourable gentleman ſay next? He informs us, that we ſhould impoſe high duties on the trade, on the negroes imported into the iſlands. Permit me, however, Sir, to aſk, where theſe duties muſt neceſſarily be collected? In the Weſt Indies where every reſiſtance will be given, and where it will be impoſſible to exact them? But I appeal even to the gallant Admiral himſelf, ſuppoſing thoſe duties to be laid on, if the ſlaves would not be ſmuggled into the iſlands, and this I think ſhews completely how one argument cuts the throat of the other, for then your reſolution would be of no effect.

" But the propoſition which was made ſome years ago by the relation of the ſame honourable member, ſeems to me the moſt extraordinary; for he propoſed, that the Houſe ſhould ſet about ſelecting particular victims, the females of Africa, before the abolition of the Slave Trade took place. Let us enquire what is the ſtate of Africa at this time. An honourable gentleman has ſaid that nothing is ſo great a puniſhment as to ſend a ſlave back to his own country. Sir, I believe it. What is the ſtate of a man, who, torn from his family and friends, is again tranſported to the vaſt deſerts of Africa? What connections, what protection could he hope to find there?

" The gallant Admiral informs us, that he wiſhes the preſent meaſure to be poſtponed until the year 1812. For what purpoſe? It is not even to import females into our iſlands excluſively, in order to keep up the population, againſt which practice a right honourable gentleman, now no more, had moſt eloquently ſaid, " What, would you go to the coaſt of Africa to ſelect the victims of your inhumanity from that ſex, whom you are peculiarly bound to protect?" This, Sir, I think was a complete anſwer to

ſuch an expedient. But that the importations would not be with a view to the maintenance of the population I have already ſaid; and when I mentioned this ſubject the other night, I aſſerted, that at the end of the period they would not be in a better ſituation to maintain their population than they are at preſent. This I think likewiſe furniſhes an anſwer to an argument urged by Mr. PLUMER, for I think, that until the end of time, if you grant them the period now required, they will not be able to aboliſh the trade; and that learned counſel himſels confeſſed, that the importations could only be made for the ſake of cultivating new lands.

" The ſame gallant Admiral then tells you, that the hurricanes in the Weſt Indies occaſion ſuch devaſtation, that it is neceſſary to reſort to the Slave Trade to repair them. But do we believe in the exiſtence of a God, and the intervention of Providence, and is there any thing which can ſpeak more to the heart of man than one of theſe hurricanes, which, for aught we know, may be a preſent viſitation for our crimes? What, however, does the gallant Admiral tell you to do? Inſtead of man humbling himſelf before his Maker, he ſays, 'I will go to Africa and ſupply myſelf by robbery and murder there, for what God has taken away from me in the Weſt Indies.'

" I will not trouble the Houſe farther on this occaſion, but I could not ſuffer the queſtion to be put without expreſſing my feelings, and repeating what is my decided opinion; and I do warn the abolitioniſts from falling into the trap which is thus laid for them, and recommend them to adopt this bill, which is the only method effectually to produce what is deſired.

" Mr. ROSE.—" Although I think it would be better to have a gradual, than a ſudden abolition of this trade, yet I feel a difficulty in agreeing with the amendment. I widely differ from an honourable member oppoſite me, (Mr. WHITBREAD) who ſays, that thoſe who are for a gradual abolition, are in truth againſt the abolition.

Mr. WHITBREAD.—" I did not ſay ſo."

Mr.

Mr. Rose.—" At leaſt I ſo underſtood the honourable member, and I was unwilling to be miſunderſtood, and that it ſhould be ſuppoſed, that becauſe I was not a friend to the ſudden abolition, I was deſirous of giving perpetuity to the trade. The firſt moment I heard of the abolition of the Slave Trade, 18 or 19 years ago, from my honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce) on the bench near me, I ſaid, that I did think it might be a right meaſure, wiſhing at the ſame time to put an end to it in a way not diſadvantageous to thoſe who have a ſtrong claim upon the country for protection. I wiſh the committee ſeriouſly to conſider what will be the conſequence of this Bill. After you have regulated the trade, ſo as to make the conveyance of ſlaves as convenient as poſſible, you then divert it into another channel, where no ſuch humane regulations will exiſt, and where the negroes would be involved in all the horrors to which they were before expoſed, when Parliament had not interfered for their preſervation.

" I am not one of thoſe who think that the deliberations of the Legiſlature for ſo long a period on this ſubject, have been pernicious. Inſtead of thinking them a diſadvantage, I think that the diſcuſſion has been attended with great advantage to the condition of the negroes in the Weſt Indies.

" Gentlemen may not be aware how much this queſtion of the Slave Trade has at different times attracted public attention. There was an act paſſed for encouraging the Slave Trade, not brought in by a private individual in the Houſe for private purpoſes, but introduced by the Secretary of State, when Mr. Locke was a member of the Houſe, and Lord Sommers was Chancellor. Under theſe circumſtances the bill originated. The next proceeding was in the year 1709, when there was a petition on the ſubject, which was referred to a committee of trade to be reported upon. In the year 1730, it was again taken into conſideration, and then was paſſed a remarkable reſolution in its favour. The next proceeding I find was in the year 1749, when again, after a long diſcuſſion it was reſolved *nem. con.* that the trade to Africa ought to be free, ought not to be taxed, &c.

Then

Then we come to 23 Geo. I. when a man of no leſs importance than Lord Hardwicke was Chancellor. A bill was at that time brought in, with the particulars of which gentlemen are familiar, which begins with reciting, "Whereas the Trade to Africa is neceſſary to Great Britain," &c. In the year 1750 the affairs of the African Company were again taken up; again in 1756, and ſubſequently in 1758. In the courſe of my obſervations on the progreſs of theſe meaſures, I have had occaſion to notice great and eminent perſons who unavoidably from their ſtations mixed in them, and who were as remarkable for feeling as for integrity.

"The opinions of ſo many diſtinguiſhed characters I do not produce to influence the debate as applicable to the preſent object, but I do it merely to excite the attention of the committee to the preamble of the bill. If there were any advantage reſulting, or likely to accrue, from adhering to the preamble, I would not reſiſt it: but it is a libel againſt the great men I have named, who for a century have had the trade under their conſideration, and who have ſanctioned it by every means in their power. Nobody doubts there are thoſe who would put notions into the heads of the ſlaves unfavourable to the peace of the colonies. "The Parliament has ſaid," they will tell them, "that the trade is unjuſt and inhuman, that the law is unjuſt by which they were brought from their native homes, to be expoſed to inſult, and to be condemned to ſervitude." I have no means of judging of the effect of ſuch language upon the minds of theſe people more than others, but I throw this out now, that gentlemen may have time to reflect upon it, and to determine if there be an advantage in adhering to theſe words of the preamble, ſo conſiderable as to outweigh the objection I have now ſtated.

"There are two or three points for which no proviſion is made in the bill, though I admit it is a difficult thing in a meaſure of this extent, to comprize in one view every object of importance. It is a common thing in the iſlands for gentlemen to let their eſtates with this condition on the leaſes, that they are to be farmed with a ſpecific number of negroes. There are others who mortgage

and

and make it a condition of the poſſeſſion, that the number of ſlaves upon their eſtates ſhall not be diminiſhed. Various other difficulties would ariſe from any ſudden determination on this ſubject, and theſe operate on my mind to make it appear to me more deſirable to put an end to it progreſſively by duties under the circumſtances I have ſtated, which would ſecure all the advantages, and occaſion no portion of the detriment with which the bill in its preſent ſhape muſt be attended. By ſuch a deciſion there muſt, according to the courſe and nature of the trade, be a number of ſlaves brought to the coaſt of Africa for which there will be no market, and in that caſe, ſcenes of carnage and deſtruction may be there exhibited, which the former hiſtory of the trade would lead us to predict.

" I believe there was no ſubject that was nearer the heart of a late illuſtrious ſtateſman, (Mr. PITT) than the abolition of the Slave Trade, and I own I did not always agree with him in the mode in which it was to be effected, although I concurred ſo generally in moſt of his views of national policy.

" I thought it right to ſubmit to the notice of the committee theſe general obſervations, that in accompliſhing the abolition of the Slave Trade, the good might be attained with as little evil as poſſible."

Lord HENRY PETTY.—" Sir, if I have remained hitherto ſilent, it was not from a want of intereſt in the queſtion, but becauſe I was anxious to give way to thoſe, whoſe opinions I conſidered ſo much more valuable than my own. Unwilling as I am to enter at any length into the ſubject, yet with the conviction which I entertain, in common with my honourable friend, that the propoſition made by the honourable Baronet ought not to be acceded to, I ſhould be ſorry to remain ſilent when ſuch a queſtion was to be decided. Before, however, I proceed to that ſubject, I would ſay a very few words upon what has been ſtated by a right honourable gentleman oppoſite, (Mr. ROSE.)

" I will only aſk that honourable gentleman and the Houſe, if they are to refer to the authorities he has mentioned, as arguments in this Houſe, to prove either the juſtice,

juſtice, the humanity, or the policy of the Slave Trade; whether ſuch authorities may not be adduced, and ſuch arguments may not be applied to every other caſe? As all improvement is gradual, and experience is likewiſe gradual, there will be in all times found great abuſes, which great abuſes may perhaps have been ſanctioned by thoſe who have preceded us; but I muſt ſtate, that it is a groſs libel upon thoſe authorities which have been quoted to-night, to pretend that they ever gave their ſanction to any proceeding which was at that time conſidered to be unjuſt, unleſs the whole proceeding is proved to have been brought before them, and ſubmitted to their inſpection. But ſuppoſing, even, that to be the caſe, ſuppoſing Mr. LOCKE, or any other great man, who has written on the ſubject, ſuppoſing every thing reſpectable in literature or morals, had given approbation to what is now the ſubject of diſcuſſion, yet they can be no authorities upon which we are to found our deciſion; for errors can only be detected as light is gradually thrown upon them. It has been in this manner, that all the abuſes which exiſted in the Catholic church have been remedied, and it is thus, that the reformation was effected. It was in the ſame way, that torture, which had been ſanctioned and encouraged in former ages, has been put an end to, and I am perfectly ſure, that no man preſent will attempt to defend that moſt barbarous practice.

" But, Sir, having ſaid thus much, I will apply myſelf to the queſtion before the Houſe. It is admitted, Sir, not only by the honourable Baronet himſelf, but alſo by many of thoſe who ſupport his motion, that the Slave Trade is unjuſt. That, Sir, is the point with which they ſet out, and then they go on next to ſay, that though it be unjuſt, yet be it enacted that injuſtice and inhumanity be continued to be practiced, ſo long as we can prove that it is to the intereſt of the planters and merchants of the Weſt Indies. They admit all the horrors that are practiced in the interior of the Continent of Africa, and they allow, that the negro is dragged from his country and home—(a cry of No, No, from General GASCOIGNE) The honourable gentleman may, if he pleaſe, make himſelf a ſingle exception, but I truſt that will be of no effect,

effect, for I am aware, that he has never been a friend even of the gradual abolition; that he has even been the ſupporter of the abſtract propoſition that the Slave Trade is in itſelf a good thing."

General GASCOIGNE.—" Sir, I ſpeak to order."

Mr. BATHURST.—" I apprehend, Sir, that what has been ſaid by the noble Lord, is perfectly in order."

Lord HENRY PETTY.—" I really, Sir, have only to ſay, that I had no intention to allude to the honourable General in the firſt inſtance, but he himſelf provoked me to do it; but I now return to the argument. My friends admitting, as they do, the miſchiefs attending the dragging theſe perſons from their families; and granting, as they alſo do, and as all men of humanity muſt, the crimes committed in the courſe of this traffic; allowing, as they do, all theſe things, they ſtill ſay, that a poſſible caſe is made out, for the ſake of which all theſe evils are to be continued, although indeed for a limited period; and if that be the fact, all I aſk is, that if ſuch a continuance is to be placed in the ſcale and balanced againſt the guilt which may be incurred on our part, the queſtion is at leaſt deſerving of an accurate ſcrutiny before we give way to their importunities.

" What then is ſtated by thoſe gentlemen who ſupport the motion as to the neceſſity of the continuance of the trade? They have made out two points: the firſt, reſpecting the intereſts of the Weſt India planters; the ſecond, the neceſſity of keeping up the population of the iſlands, and the happineſs of the negroes themſelves. To both of theſe heads it will be neceſſary for me to apply myſelf. I will firſt proceed to the queſtion of the population of the Weſt Indies. I believe, that there is no great objection made to the ſtatements on the table of the males and females in the iſlands; but certain it is, that moſt exaggerated aſſertions have been made upon the ſubject to the Houſe. Collecting, however, all the accounts from the different iſlands, it is clear that the diſproportion is ſmall in all of them; but in many inſtances

the proportion of males and females is equal; and in ſome indeed, there are more of the latter than the former. This is ſhewn from the papers upon the table. It will there be found for example, that Dominica makes a return of more females than males; and the ſame is the caſe with the Bahama iſlands. There are other iſlands in which the ſtatements are leſs favourable. However, it is a well known fact, that from the moment population takes its ordinary courſe, when it is unreſtricted by hardſhips or want of ſubſiſtence, the evil which is now complained of will gradually diminiſh; nor can it be doubted for an inſtant, that in the common courſe of nature the diſproportion complained of will correct itſelf in a very ſhort time. There can be no difference of opinion on that point, becauſe in every ſituation in which human beings are placed, to their increaſe there are no checks but theſe; cruel treatment, want of ſubſiſtence, or extreme licentiouſneſs of manners. Where theſe checks do not exiſt, population may not only be kept up, but it may alſo be increaſed to an indefinite extent. The abolition will not impede this proſpect while other means of cultivating the plantations more certain and more ſafe than that of importing negroes will gradually preſent themſelves. There can be no reaſon why the population in the Weſt Indies ſhould not increaſe in the ſame way as in other countries, and we know that North America in the courſe of twenty-five years, has doubled the number of its inhabitants. The amount of the births there, according to the beſt evidence, was eight to each marriage, and upon an average we may reckon that four of the children lived to be married, and have families of their own. Let us look back to hiſtory, and we ſhall find in what way theſe ſtates were firſt peopled. We learn, that there were ſets of adventurers who went over to that country with a much ſmaller proportion of females than now is found in the Weſt India iſlands; and yet there is not in the records of the world a ſtatement of ſo rapid an increaſe in the population as has taken place in the northern parts of the American Continent. What have we to look to as the cauſe of the decreaſe of population in the Weſt Indies?

Indies? To nothing but the ſtate of wickedneſs, oppreſſion, and degradation in which men are there placed.

" My honourable friend made it an argúment, that he knew of ſeveral inſtances where the experiment had been tried of encouraging marriages among the negroes, and that they had failed. In anſwer to this, I would ſay, that I do not think it is poſſible to draw any ſatisfactory concluſions from an inſulated expriment. It is only by a ſimultaneous effort on the part of the planters, that any great benefit can be produced. But I beg to be underſtood, as not meaning to throw blame on that body of men who are connected with the Weſt Indies, or to ſay or to inſinuate that they act more unworthily than others would do in the ſame ſituation. All we aſſert is, that the characters of men muſt depend greatly on the circumſtances under which they are placed, and that had we been unhappily placed in the ſituation of Weſt Indians, we ſhould have probably felt and acted as they have done.

" What, Sir, however, did my honourable friend, (Mr. BARHAM) tell you on a former occaſion? He ſaid, that for the firſt time going into a ſlave market, and ſeeing the miſeries of mothers torn from their children, and friends from their friends, he turned from it with horror, and made a reſolution never to allow a ſlave to be purchaſed for his eſtates afterwards. If that be the fact, and if he perſiſted in his reſolution, that muſt be conſidered to be an act of immediate abolition on his own plantations; and knowing the ſame circumſtances, being aware of the ſame facts, having his teſtimony to their truth, are we to be deterred from carrying into effect this general meaſure? Sir, I hope the Houſe will not be deterred, and will feel the importance of an immediate abolition.

" But it is ſtated, that not only is the continuance of the trade neceſſary to enable the planters to keep up the population of their eſtates, but neceſſary for the happineſs of the negroes themſelves, for the ſake of enabling them, among other things, to receive intelligence from their friends in Africa! That, Sir, is an argument which need only ſtate, that it may be refuted. But an honourable friend of mine on the ſame bench, has ſaid, " Will not the planters have an intereſt in increaſing the work of

the negroes when they can get no more ſupplies?" Can the planter draw any ſuch concluſion? Will he ſay "Becauſe I am to have no more negroes, therefore I will continue the cruelty I exerciſe upon them, and diminiſh the number ſtill more?" No, Sir, on the contrary, would he not exclaim, "Seeing that the number of my negroes is leſſened by cruelty and hard labour, I muſt alter my ſyſtem in order to increaſe the number that are ſtill in exiſtence."

"But I have heard, that from the want of females (they being fewer than the males) this meaſure would produce miſchievous effects, and that the Weſt India iſlands would be one ſcene of immorality; but in that reſpect I believe the effect would be directly oppoſite to what is expected, becauſe the female, which is now conſidered merely as an inſtrument of labour, and the object of luſt, will then be reſpected; for from the moment the abolition paſſes, it becomes the intereſt of the planter to encourage marriages, (the moſt effectual check to licentiouſneſs) and to remedy thoſe circumſtances which corrupt the minds and deſtroy the health of the ſlaves.

"With this view, therefore, I am of opinion, that the immediate abolition is the only means by which general good treatment can be produced. We know, by experience, if we frame laws to be executed in the Weſt Indies, how imperfect will be their fulfilment. We know alſo how little willing the planters are to take warning on this ſubject; and that it is only by immediate abolition that we can induce them to change their treatment of their dependents.

"This meaſure is alſo neceſſary before we can even begin to pay the great debt which we owe to Africa; and in which we ought to admit of no delay. But until we put an end to the importation of ſlaves into our Weſt India iſlands, there can exiſt no hope of African civilization. By this change of ſyſtem, however, we may look for the entrance of civilization even into the receſſes of Africa. By the abolition, the miſeries ſuffered in the Weſt Indies will be alleviated, and thoſe cruelties which are practiced in the middle paſſage, which no regulation can reach, will be concluded. I do therefore hope, that this Houſe will not

not unneceſſarily delay for a ſingle moment the paſſing o this bill.

" Of my honourable friend oppoſite (Mr. WILBERFORCE) I will ſay nothing. His praiſes have been ſpoken by a tongue more eloquent than mine. I can only leave him to the gratification he muſt receive from the completion of ſuch a work as this; and if he ſhould alſo ſucceed in beſtowing civilization on the great Continent of Africa, hiſtory will have to record one of the greateſt benefits that was ever conferred by any individual."

General GASCOIGNE.—" It is impoſſible for me to follow all the arguments which have been adduced this night, but I may venture to ſay, that they have been often refuted, although they are now repeated.

" In carrying this meaſure into execution, it has been ſaid, that we do nothing more than fulfil what was determined on by a former parliament. But if we are bound by that parliament, with equal propriety we are bound by all former parliaments. This Houſe, on former occaſions, reſolved both ways, in terms equally ſtrong. In 1796 there were reſolutions as determinate for the abolition, as any which have ſince paſſed.

" Where is the uſe," it is aſked, " of ſending out commiſſioners to the Weſt Indies?" Sir, if the honourable gentleman (Mr. WILBERFORCE) ſuppoſed to be ſo much diſtinguiſhed for his knowledge, and certainly pre-eminent for his zeal on this ſubject, would undertake ſuch an expedition to accompliſh the great object he wiſhes to attain, we ſhould, Sir, have all the information you can wiſh, and we might proceed in future alterations with advantage and effect.

" The preſent meaſure, in my opinion, is wholly unneceſſary. The act of laſt year, to prevent new ſhips from entering into the trade, would have aboliſhed it in a few years, and this may ſhew that I do not oppoſe all the modes of abolition.

" If in the meaſure of the reſtriction on ſhipping, it were to have been a condition, not to have tranferred the ownerſhip from one to another, and that there ſhould be no hereditary right of carrying on the trade, it would have

have effected in a ſhort time, all the objects of this bill. If I have not had the good ſucceſs of proving that would be the effect, I muſt candidly ſay, that it was not my opinion that the Slave Trade ought to laſt for ever. I am of opinion, that the Slave Trade ſhould be aboliſhed, but becauſe I am ſo, am I neceſſarily to think that this is the preciſe mode and time in which it ought to be done? However expedient it may be to aboliſh the trade, the mode in which it is to be effected is a ſubject of grave conſideration, and it is not merely the reſolutions which have been paſſed that it ſhould be aboliſhed, that can juſtify any means that have been propoſed to effect that object. The mode is a ſeparate and diſtinct conſideration, and had a gradual abolition been reſorted to, which was long ſince propoſed, it would have terminated in 1796, inſtead of being under a diſcuſſion in the year 1807.

" The noble Lord (HENRY PETTY) on the oppoſite ſide of the Houſe, doubts if the circumſtances attending this traffic were preſented to the pure and upright mind of Mr. LOCKE, and if they had been, the noble Lord ſays that Mr. LOCKE would not have entertained the opinions he did. The noble Lord means to ſay that Mr. LOCKE knew nothing of the facts, and if that reſpectable perſon was miſtaken, perhaps the noble Lord will admit that it may be poſſible he is miſtaken alſo; and to confirm him in ſuch a ſuppoſition, I will obſerve to him, that the evidence before the noble Lord is incomplete, and is not that which ſhould guide his judgment in the preſent queſtion.

" With reſpect to the middle paſſage, I have heard a great deal ſaid about robbery, murder, and the like, yet this is an old ſtory, and we have heard it roundly aſſerted lately by more than one honourable member, that the ſame cruelties are not now practiced which exiſted heretofore. I will venture to ſay, that neither the one noble Lord (HOWICK) nor the other noble Lord (PETTY) on the bench with him, have produced a ſingle inſtance to ſhew, that ſuch cruelties were committed. In my own opinion, Sir, they would have been ready to offer them if they could, but though they applied the terms robbery and murder very freely, yet they gave us no proof.

" With

" With reſpect to the argument of the honourable and learned gentleman, (the Solicitor General) if it had any application at all, it went to the extent of the total emancipation of the ſlaves. Of the improper treatment of theſe perſons when they are in the Weſt Indies, he ſaid a great deal, and notwithſtanding he told you of a great variety of horrors which might freeze the ſoul, he did not adduce one inſtance of cruelty which came to his knowledge in the middle paſſage.

" There is another thing with reſpect to this bill that deſerves particular regard. Although it may prevent the enormities perpetrated in Africa, it does not advance one ſtep to prevent ſimilar practices in the Weſt Indies. Thoſe who are born under the Britiſh government, and under the protection of the Britiſh legiſlature, may be ſeparated from their families, and transferred from one iſland to another, without remorſe or conſideration. Are the principles of humanity then to be confined to the Continent of Africa? Did the noble Lord mean to ſay, that what was unjuſt in Africa was juſt in the Weſt Indies, or that different maxims of equity were to be obſerved in the one ſituation and in the other? How can he vindicate his conducing to the liberty of the one, and to the ſervitude of the other? Is any time to be limited for the continuance of this ſlavery, or is it the intention to make the ſlaves work with thoſe who are to have their ſervice terminated in ſeven years, or any given period? Upon what principle could you tell one of theſe men, " You, whoſe anceſtors have become ſlaves to Britain, you are to continue in ſlavery for ever, but with reſpect to this man now brought here, there is a diſtinction to be made; he is in ſeven years to be free, and in the interval, he is only bound upon certain conditions; and he is not to ſubmit to all the ordinary difficulties of labour which you muſt endure." The noble Lord has made a material diſtinction between a child born under the guardianſhip of the Britiſh legiſlature, and one who receives its nativity on the coaſt of Africa. The one is liable to be tranſported to different iſlands, is liable, at the will of his proprietor to be put up to public ſale; but no African is hereafter to be expoſed to any of theſe ſituations.

" As

" As to the middle paſſage, let the noble Lord move for the returns, and he will be ſatisfied of his miſtake. Is the noble Lord aware, that in order to encourage a vigilant attention to the health of the negroes, a bounty is given to every ſurgeon where three only out of a hundred die?

" But it is not on this ſubject alone that they have withheld the evidence. Is it not within the knowledge of the Houſe, that there is no good reaſon aſſigned for not receiving the ſatisfactory evidence of the two laſt governors of Jamaica? The reaſon they give is, that they know from previous information, that ſuch evidence was not exactly what they wanted to produce to the Houſe; and the truth is, that they would willingly have it excluded from the Houſe. The noble Lord (HOWICK) very well knows, that it was propoſed at a time when it would not have intruded upon the valuable time of the Houſe, and he knows as well, that had the evidence been produced, he would have been unfortunately deprived of many of his moſt powerful arguments. There were arguments adduced by him, which to men of information, were utterly nugatory, and which the noble Lord would have certainly excluded, if he had been poſſeſſed of all the information neceſſary on ſuch an occaſion.

" There was another argument uſed by a noble Lord with regard to the diſproportion of the ſexes, and connected with the moral happineſs of man; and he ſaid, as I have before intimated, that the diſproportion is not ſo great as has been repreſented, and he thought the beſt way to prevent bad conſequences would be, to inculcate moral ideas, and to promote marriage. There appears to me a conſiderable difficulty in this caſe, of which the noble Lord is not apprized. There is a ſort of polygamy allowed on the coaſt of Africa, in conſequence of which, females are not ſo eaſily obtained as may be ſuppoſed, and whatever may be the comparative price in the Weſt Indies between the males and females, they ſell for the ſame price upon the coaſt.

" On this ſubject, you muſt conſider a variety of other matters. Men do not go over to the Weſt Indies either for mere ſalaries, or on ſpeculations of remote profit; they therefore,

therefore, do not want female ſlaves with the view to emolument from the labours of a new generation, but they want males, able bodied, in order to do their work, and to clear the road to immediate wealth. Notwithſtanding the plauſible argument employed in favour of this amendment, under the expectation of reſtoring the equipoiſe of the ſexes, I am very much afraid that females cannot be procured, and therefore I think that the honourable Baronet (Sir CHARLES POLE) would not ſucceed in this object of his meaſure.

" Whilſt there is this diſproportion in the ſexes, the means cannot be acquired by which the cultivation of the colonies muſt be ſupported; and we ſhall find much diſinclination in the planters, to reſtore that proportion of the ſexes, on which the maintenance of the black population muſt ultimately depend. Numbers of them will not look beyond a period of ſix or ſeven years, and few indeed will be attentive to the advantages that ſhall accrue to their poſterity.

" Under all theſe circumſtances then, what have you to expect from your immediate abolition? If any thing I have ſtated be accurate, there will be a reduction of the population, and a diminution of the culture.

" On the whole, Sir, although certainly, I do not mean to object to the honourable Baronet's motion, yet I do think, that without ſome modification, that motion will not be effectual; and I will venture to affirm, that unleſs there be ſome mode of getting the approbation of the colonies, there is no bill this Houſe can enact, that will carry this favourite meaſure into execution. All the effect of the bill will be, giving up a trade which has hitherto been beneficial and lucrative, and likewiſe, a material advantage to the reſources of the country; and although we may moſt of us agree, that in point of juſtice and humanity the trade ſhould be aboliſhed, it is a matter of grave conſideration as to the mode in which it ſhould be effected; and you ſhould take care, that while you faithfully diſcharge your duty to the Africans, you do no injuſtice to thoſe who have acted under your own authority; and above all, that you do not add inſult to injury. Do not ſay to them, at the ſame time when you enact what

you deem eſſential to the preſervation of the colonies, "We conſider you as perpetrators of acts of injuſtice and inhumanity, although we have ourſelves countenanced and encouraged theſe practices." When we come to conſider ſeparately the preamble of the bill, I ſhall take the liberty of again treſpaſſing upon your time, but upon this particular clauſe, it was not my intention to have intruded upon you at any length."

Mr. Canning.—"Sir, I ſhall confine myſelf in what I have to offer, ſtrictly to the queſtion before the Houſe, the motion of the honourable Baronet, for prolonging the time for the Abolition of the Slave Trade; and in thus reſtricting myſelf, I am far from inſinuating any blame to thoſe gentlemen who have taken a wider range. I am tempted thus to confine myſelf, becauſe during the time I have had the honour to occupy a ſeat in this Houſe, I have had many opportunities of expreſſing my opinion on the general queſtion, ſo that I can have little or nothing to add upon this occaſion; I was therefore very willing and very glad to leave the queſtion in the hands of other perſons. But, Sir, the motion of the honourable Baronet is not directed to that point alone, for about the queſtion of the abolition of the Slave Trade, there no longer remains a difference of opinion; and we are met here not to diſcuſs that queſtion, but the means, and the moſt proper means, for effecting it. This is the queſtion to which the honourable Baronet brings us by his propoſition. The gallant Admiral ſtated, that a longer time appeared to him neceſſary for three diſtinct reaſons; applying ſeverally to the Continent of Africa, to the Weſt Indies, and to the intereſt of this country in the Slave Trade.

"With reſpect to the Coaſt of Africa, I think that the honourable Baronet has made uſe of very extraordinary reaſoning; for he ſaid, that he did not wiſh the Slave-Trade to ceaſe entirely, becauſe the continuation of it was neceſſary, that an equality of the ſexes might be created in the Weſt Indies. The anſwer to this has been given—exceſſive importations of females are not to be procured. But as applied to Africa there is this further

further abſurdity in it; thoſe who talk to us of the juſtifiableneſs of the traffic, found their arguments on this ground, that the ſlaves are obtained by juſtifiable means. What ſhall we think of the reaſon of the law, which confines Africa to procure victims only of the female ſex; which ſays, that the five years crimes which are to be punished with ſlavery ſhall be committed only by the weaker ſex, while the ſtronger ſhall be free from crimes, or at leaſt from puniſhment?

"He comes next, Sir, to the Weſt Indies, and there too he claims, on the part of the planters in our iſlands, that a longer time ſhould be given to them, that they may prepare themſelves againſt the abolition. An honourable Gentleman concluded his ſpeech this evening with this ſentiment, that he would rather the bill before the Houſe ſhould be loſt altogether, than that a limitation in point of time ſhould be made. I am preciſely of the ſame opinion. If there were to be a limit applied, I have not, or ever ſhall have, the leaſt heſitation in declaring, that I would rather that the meaſure ſhould at preſent fail altogether.

"There are two grounds on which the honourable Baronet claims the delay. Firſt, he claims it as a warning to the Weſt India planters. A warning of an enactment which any man, looking to the proceedings of this Houſe for the laſt twenty years, might have been prepared for.

"There is, Sir, another ground on which the gallant Admiral demands time of the Houſe; he thinks that in the ſpace of five years, a conſiderable improvement may take place, by means of regulations in the iſlands, for ameliorating the condition of the ſlaves. I wiſh nothing more than to avoid, on the whole of this ſubject, making uſe of invidious arguments; and now that I think the victory on the part of the ſupporters of this bill is no longer doubtful, I would leaſt of all utter a word which might in any point of view be conſidered inſulting; but I cannot ſhut my eyes againſt what is the known fact. The improvement which the gallant Admiral anticipates while the trade continues, is hopeleſs. But aboliſh it, and I muſt contend, that intereſt will then induce the planters to alter

their conduct. If on this ground you poſtpone the abolition for five years, you will find at the end of five years, that preciſely the ſame reaſons will exiſt for a further poſtponement. To give five years therefore is to make an indefinite extenſion of the trade.

" Sir, there is one other point which the gallant Admiral has thought fit to ſtate. He ſaid, that if you abandon the trade, it will immediately fall into the hands of our enemies; whereas, if you give due warning of the abolition, the traffic will eſcape that fate. Upon this point I rather think that the honourable Baronet left his caſe incomplete, and that he had ſome argument to adduce in ſupport of it, which he omitted to ſtate. Now, as to our enemies, at leaſt I think we could apply our maritime force to prevent their ſucceeding to the trade we have abandoned: but if we mean gravely to give notice that at the end of five years we ſhall relinquiſh the trade, we may be then found not at war, but at peace with all the world, and other nations may be in a ſtate immediately to take it up.

" On every ground, therefore, there can be no doubt reſpecting the propriety of an immediate abolition. The only choice is, either to adopt the meaſure as it now ſtands before the Houſe, or to make up our minds to reject it altogether. Into the general argument I will not enter, becauſe I am convinced, that to it there is nothing new to be added. A queſtion of the greateſt importance has now been ſet at reſt. The victory is won; and in that ſtate it becomes the Houſe, and the Government of this country, to do every thing in their power to reconcile thoſe who were antagoniſts to the meaſure. It is their buſineſs to ſoften rather than to irritate them; and when this act ſhall have paſſed, I am ſure I need not ſay that it will be our duty to avoid what may be harſh and unreaſonable; yet at the ſame time it will be our duty to ſee that the act is carried into effect. And it will be a conſolation to me, that the planters will find, that their intereſt, when it is largely conſidered, is on the ſame ſide, as humanity to mankind and the world."

Mr. Stanhope.

Mr. STANHOPE.—" If we do not paſs the preſent bill, we never ſhall paſs a bill for the abolition of the Slave Trade. This meaſure is propoſed after ſeventeen years conſideration, and the Houſe having ſuffered many interruptions, has at laſt come to a ſound concluſion, and leſt the paroxiſm ſhould return, I am for taking advantage of the lucid interval. I have ſupported this queſtion ever ſince it was introduced, but it has always been until this moment with ſome ſecret feeling, that it was much eaſier to paſs the bill than to enforce it. But I now think that there is a moſt fortunate coincidence in the time and circumſtances. The French cannot carry on the trade during the war; there is a concurrence in the meaſure on the part of America, and there is hardly a nation in Europe which can carry it on. On that account I am peculiarly ſolicitous to give effect to the meaſure at this particular time."

Mr. BATHURST.—" I ſhall not treſpaſs at any length on the time of the Houſe, but conſidering the part I took the other night in the debate, I owe it in juſtice to myſelf to ſay a few words.

" In anſwer to my noble friend (Lord HENRY PETTY) in reſpect to the comparative obſervations he makes, as to the immediate and the gradual abolition, it may be ſaid, that he proceeds upon the aſſumption that it is in your power immediately to aboliſh the trade, an aſſumption which is not well founded. I do not mean that you cannot enact a law, but I do mean, that enact what laws you pleaſe, you have it not in your power to produce the inſtantaneous effect you contemplate. Is it practicable, or is it not, is the queſtion between the noble Lord and me. Can he ſatisfy me, that what is capable of being the ſubject of legiſlation, muſt neceſſarily be capable of being reduced into practice? My doubts ariſe from this ſource, and I ſay, that without ſome concurrence of the Weſt India planters moſt intereſted in the queſtion, all your legiſlative proviſions muſt be inſufficient.

" With reſpect to the population, what are the ſentiments we ought to entertain? A humane and enlightened proprietor has told you, that he has found in his own caſe

caſe it is impoſſible to preſerve the population, and in confirmation of what I have juſt ſaid of the inefficiency of laws, he tells you, that it is impoſſible to prevent the importation of ſlaves by thoſe who are deſirous of obtaining them. Then judging of others by the ſituation of this gentleman, they cannot, by the beſt means in their power to employ, keep up the population; and I have likewiſe the ſame teſtimony for the allegation, that if it be the intereſt of the planter to import, he will do ſo. You may enact prohibitions, but you cannot carry them into effect.

" I look upon this amendment as fixing a definite period when the trade will be aboliſhed, but I wiſh to connect with it, other auxiliary meaſures which would gradually and effectually diminiſh the drain of ſlaves from Africa. The definite period thus aſſigned would give an aſſurance that the trade muſt be aboliſhed, and the intervening meaſures properly framed, would have a progreſſive, but a ſure operation. By holding out theſe two points, a definite period, and a gradual abolition, you preſent the faireſt proſpect of having the meaſure accompliſhed.

" It is ſaid, that if you do not adopt the project of the immediate abolition, you will never have the trade aboliſhed at all. That was a good argument until now, that the bill has not originated with ourſelves, but comes to us with the concurrence of the other Houſe. Now the principle of abolition is admitted by that branch of the legiſlature, what was before a matter of great uncertainty, is now no longer doubtful. This argument then, however ſound it might be formerly, has at preſent no application.

" I know, Sir, that there is not the moſt diſtant hope that the meaſure will be carried in the way I recommend, I am therefore only diſcharging a painful duty in this expoſition of my opinions before the Committee. I have ineffectually repreſented that the abolition ought to take place by progreſſively increaſing duties, which muſt neceſſarily lead to the final extinction of the trade, yet it is ſaid, that it is better to let the meaſure take its chance

at

at a future time, than to adopt any of the amendments ſuggeſted.

" I have been, as I think, perfectly conſiſtent in what I have done; and when I have oppoſed the preſent bill, I have reſiſted only what appears to me to be no abolition at all, although it is ſuppoſed to be ſo.

" If this trade be againſt the principles of juſtice and humanity, it ought to ceaſe, and nobody will contend that forcing perſons from their native country under the circumſtances which have been ſtated, or even under any circumſtances, is not wrong. Then I ſay, that if you cannot aboliſh the trade immediately, you muſt for a time ſubmit to ſome things inconſiſtent with juſtice, and perhaps ſhocking to humanity; becauſe you cannot haſtily get out of a trade ſanctioned ſo long by the laws and protection of this country. I admit that I am injuring the Africans, but then I balance the grievance to the inhabitants of Africa, with the advantage to the planters and to the colonies; and I am forced to admit, that for the ſake of permanent good, I am obliged to commit an evil.

" But how is this conſiſtent with what is ſtated by an honourable member, who ſays, " If you want equality of ſexes, what have you been about for the laſt twenty years? You have had full and ſufficient notice; you knew that the ſexes were unequal; why have you not done what is neceſſary to remove this diſproportion?" That obſervation leads me to the laſt point on which I ſhall trouble the committee. The planters cannot be conſidered in any ſenſe as having had a warning of the purpoſe of the legiſlature until the preſent moment, and until they have ſuch warning, they cannot ſurely be conſidered as having had full and ſufficient notice. The information to them with reſpect to the deſigns of this Houſe only, the other being ſuppoſed to be againſt the meaſure, was nothing. I ſay then, that the parties had not a ſufficient notice to provide for their own ſecurity; that they had no competent notice to increaſe the importation of females, or to ameliorate the condition of the ſlaves with the view to the permanent benefit of their eſtates by augmenting the means of population.

" Theſe

"Theſe are the principles I have thought it my duty to ſtate, but certainly without the ſmalleſt hope of ſucceſs."

Mr. BARHAM (to explain).—"I have ſaid, Sir, that it would not have been in our power, ſome time ago, to prevent the importation of the ſlaves. At this time I think it is perfectly in our power. In a former time I believe it was not, and therefore I voted againſt the abolition. Circumſtances having changed, I have certainly voted generally for the abolition. The right honourable gentleman (Mr. BATHURST) has miſunderſtood me in another point, when he ſuppoſed me to ſay, that the iſlands could not maintain their population. I did not ſay that, but only that their not increaſing is not a fair criterion of good treatment. There could not be a more fatal propoſition made than that of poſtponing the abolition of the trade; for it would only be aggravating its miſery. All the arguments recommend that we ſhould aboliſh it now, and having begun the meaſure, let us accompliſh it. Sir, I wiſh to ſtate another point. I never meant to aſſert that I thought the abolition to be injurious to the intereſts of the iſlands. I conceived that the abolition was eſſential to their very exiſtence, and that it would promote their general proſperity. There are, however, many caſes where it will produce abſolute ruin to individuals. Sir, when we come to the conſideration of the preamble of this bill, I ſhall feel it my duty again to expreſs my opinion upon the ſubject."

Mr. PERCIVAL.—"I wiſh to make a few obſervations on the ſpeech of my right honourable friend oppoſite to me, (Mr. BATHURST.)

"My right honourable friend ſays, that he does not vote for the immediate abolition, becauſe, in truth and fact, it would be no abolition, and the trade would be continued in oppoſition to any of our legiſlative regulations. Why then object, if the immediate abolition will not diminiſh the trade? The traffic will go on as before on his principle, and there will be no maſſacres on the African coaſt, and none of thoſe ſanguinary conſequences he apprehends. So he ſays, that if you will aboliſh the

trade

trade on your ſtatute books, you will not prevent the ſupply in the interior of the iſlands. So that there is really no ground of alarm according to his own account in the meaſure; it will neither have any effect upon the coaſt of Africa, nor upon the colonies, and thoſe who wiſh to continue the trade ought to be averſe to this amendment for a delay of five years, ſince my right honourable friend ſays, that with ſuch procraſtination it would be effectually aboliſhed. The preſent bill can be of no injury either to the ſhip owner, planter, or merchant, becauſe if this reaſoning be true, it muſt be abſolutely inefficient and nugatory.

" But my right honourable friend ſays, that you cannot aboliſh the trade; you can do ſo five years hence, but he tells you, that you cannot do ſo now. Why not immediately? becauſe, ſays he, the internal legiſlatures will not be concurrent with you, and you can do nothing effectual without their aſſiſtance. Then he adds, if you will give them a notice of five years, then they will coincide in your project, and purſue the means conducive to the abolition. What ſecurity is there of any ſuch concurrence at the end of five or of fifty years? Will not the ſame intereſts prevail? Will not the ſame diſinclination continue to any diſtant period? If all the difficulties exiſt which my right honourable friend ſuppoſes, there muſt be ſomething peculiarly operative and commanding at the concluſion of theſe five years, which is reſerved for that favoured period, and no other. These are contradictions unavoidably reſulting from the arguments of my right honourable friend, which I leave to be reconciled by him, well aware of my total incapacity for ſuch a purpoſe. There is no reaſon for imagining, according to my view of the ſubject, that if you cannot prevent it now, you can five years hence.

" Then it has been ſaid by an honourable gentleman under the gallery, that while we command the navigation of the ſeas, we have the means of preventing the trade. This remark furniſhes another motive for the immediate abolition. If we wait five years hence, are we ſure that the war will be continued ſo that we can make uſe of our ſuperiority at ſea to enable us to aboliſh it? I

think, then, this is a favourable moment to attain the object; when peace is reſtored, you cannot do it.

" My right honourable friend ſaid, impoſe large duties upon the importation of ſlaves, and this will prevent their introduction into the iſlands, when a direct law to prohibit the importation will not have that effect. But does it not occur to every man, that it muſt be much more eaſy for your ſhips of war to obſtruct the importation when the commodity ſhall be contraband throughout the whole voyage from the coaſt of Africa to the Weſt Indies, than when it is only contraband the moment the ſlaves land on the iſlands, the duty not having been regularly diſcharged? It is aſtoniſhing to me, that ſuch an argument can be employed, ſo capable of immediate refutation. In the one caſe, they cannot ſail a league from the coaſt of Africa; in the other, they may croſs the Atlantic, enter the Gulph of Mexico, and until the ſlaves actually ſet foot on the iſlands not the leaſt moleſtation can be offered. This is a moſt curious way in which my right honourable friend propoſes to aboliſh the trade.

" I admit with the honourable member who ſpoke under the gallery, that it would be better to reject the bill intirely than to receive it with the amendment ſupported by my right honourable friend. I would reject it and take it with all the riſks of future years. I would propoſe it next year, I would propoſe it the following, I would propoſe it every ſucceeding year if I were unſucceſsful, and I think I ſhould have a better chance of accompliſhing my deſign, than if the queſtion were ſet at reſt for five years in the manner now propoſed.

" If your argument be that you cannot aboliſh the trade until the population ſhall be able to be maintained by the equalization of the ſexes, I would aſk, what reaſon have you to ſuppoſe that the parties intereſted will take the meaſures neceſſary to reſtore that equality in the interval you ſhall give them? You will tell them, that you will not aboliſh the trade while this diſproportion prevails, and can you ſuppoſe, that the effect of ſuch information will be, that they will produce that equalization in order to accelerate the abolition they dread? The truth is, that if you poſtpone the time for the abolition in the way now ſuggeſted,

geſted, all you do is to ſecure its continuance for five years, but you do nothing towards producing a ſituation to enable you to aboliſh it at the end of that time.

" If the trade be not ſo effectually put down as we hope it may be, I ſay proceed with the bill, and we will take our chance. We do, at leaſt, locally aboliſh it; and if this meaſure be not ſucceſsful on the whole, we ſhall in the courſe of the five years be improving our hands at it, and it will be hard indeed, if in that interval we ſhall not accompliſh our purpoſe; whereas, if we adopt this amendment, we ſhall at the end of five years be juſt in the ſtate in which we are now. If the Houſe really intend to aboliſh the trade, let it be made illegal now, and this will ſecure the greateſt probability of deſtroying it before the five years are elapſed.

" I have not before upon any occaſion offered to addreſs you on the ſubject of this bill; I felt that there were many who were more eager than I was to expreſs their ſentiments to the Houſe and to the public, but I could not avoid wiſhing to attract your attention, in order to expreſs my opinions in anſwer to thoſe ſtated by my right honourable friend, (Mr. BATHURST.) I am fully perſuaded, that any apprehenſion of the impoſſibility of carrying the meaſure into effect, will be felt as ſtrongly at the end of five years, as it will now: I ſhall endeavour, therefore, to avoid ſuch a delay, by voting for the law being rendered immediately operative."

Mr. BATHURST to explain.—" My honourable and learned friend has confined himſelf to ſtating, that I meant to aboliſh the trade five years hence. This is not correct, the propoſition was combined with another, which was that of impoſing duties progreſſively increaſing, which would have operated ſooner, and this additional meaſure ought not to have been excluded in the conſideration of my argument."

Mr. WILBERFORCE.—" I riſe merely, Sir, to correct a fact which appears to have been miſtaken. It was ſtated by an honourable member oppoſite to me, (Mr. FULLER) that the paternal eſtate of another

gentleman (Mr. WARD) under particular circumſtances, and he then went on to ſtate how contrary his ſituation was."

Mr. FULLER (to explain.)—" I always underſtood, that the circumſtances of that gentleman's eſtate were extraordinary.. As for me, I muſt find ſome means of obtaining negroes, or my eſtate will be ruined."

Mr. WILBERFORCE here referred to one of the printed papers on the table, entitled, " The number of negroes in the pariſh of St. Thomas in the Vále, with an account of the births and deaths within a certain ſpace of time, taken at an extraordinary veſtry on November the 2d, 1805," from which it appeared, that on Mr. Fuller's eſtate of Knollis's, out of a hundred and ſeventy-eight negroes in the ſpace of three years, there had been eighteen births, ten deaths, and none imported.

Mr. FULLER attempted to explain this circumſtance, but the Houſe became impatient for the queſtion, and ſtrangers being ordered to withdraw, a diviſion took place, when there appeared

Againſt the amendment - -	125
For the amendment - -	17
Majority - -	108

The Chairman (Mr. HOBHOUSE) then proceeded to read the bill paragraph by paragraph.

After a few words from Mr. ROSE, Sir CHARLES POLE, and Lord HOWICK, it was agreed that the Chairman Mr. HOBHOUSE) ſhould report the bill with the amendments to the Houſe on Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

MONDAY, 16th MARCH, 1807.

On the motion of LORD HENRY PETTY, the queſtion was put from the chair, that the Bill, for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, be read a third time.

Mr. HIBBERT.—" This being, moſt likely, the laſt time, I ſhall have an opportunity of addreſſing you on a ſubject of great importance to the nation in general, as well as to individuals, I am not diſpoſed to neglect it, although, after what has been expreſſed of the ſenſe of the Houſe, I can feel no expectation of ſucceſs.

" It has been ſaid, with what correctneſs I leave the Houſe to decide, that we have had too much cool diſcuſſion upon the queſtion. If there be a ſubject, which, above all others, ſhould demand temperate deliberation, I ſhould have thought it would have been this enquiry, involving ſo many perſonal and national conſiderations.

" Among the arguments in favour of the preſent bill, it was ſaid, that it would do more good than harm. There is, at leaſt, not much appearance of confidence in ſuch an obſervation, and we may be allowed to examine, whether the one or the other preponderate.

" An honourable gentleman (Mr. WHITBREAD) ſpoke of the ſweeping deſolation of hurricanes, to which the iſland of Jamaica, in which I am principally intereſted, was frequently expoſed, and in the enthuſiaſm with which his eloquence was inſpired, he ſeemed to attribute theſe terrible calamities to the viſitation of an avenging God for the crimes perpetrated in the proſecution of the Slave Trade. Sir, there is much moral and much phyſical evil in the world, but it is ſomewhat bold to hazard ſuch an interpretation of the awful judgments of the Almighty. When a man is ſtruck ſuddenly, as by the arm of an angel of death, in the commiſſion of ſome act of atrocity, ſuch an event may be received as a ſerious leſſon to mankind; but when an affliction of the extenſive nature referred

ferred to, affects large bodies of men, of different characters, and in different purſuits, there appears to me to be neither juſtice nor candour in the remark.

" When the arguments were put together in ſomething like a regular ſeries by the honourable gentlemen, there ſeemed to be ſomething operative againſt their own theory, when we were told that the trade had been the ſubject of legiſlation by a Britiſh Parliament; and that though, in its earlier ſtages, Queen Elizabeth expreſſed her diſapprobation of it, yet it was part of the inſtructions of Queen Anne, that the Houſe ſhould take into conſideration the nature of the trade.

" What is it then which has been ſpecifically the ſubject of legiſlation? It is the purchaſe of Slaves in Africa, and their tranſport from that continent to the Weſt Indies.

" I addreſs myſelf to many young men, who are not diſpoſed to enter into the circumſtances, or into the conſequences of the trade; to them both theſe branches of it appear to be ſo inconſiſtent with juſtice and humanity, as to preclude all enquiry as to the diſcretion and found policy on which the trade is founded. It may be proper, that theſe young men ſhould be inſtructed, that this trade, nefarious as they may conſider it, is ſanctioned by the law of the realm. The 23d Geo. II. c. 31, begins with the remarkable declaration; " Whereas the trade to and from Africa is very advantageous to Great Britain, and neceſſary for the ſupplying the plantations and colonies thereunto belonging with a ſufficient number of negroes, at reaſonable rates, and for that purpoſe the ſaid trade ought to be free and open to all His Majeſty's ſubjects, therefore be it enacted, &c."

" The act goes on, and reprobates any fraud, force, or violence on the natives of Africa, and it makes any conduct of this kind towards them penal. But why does it do ſo? Becauſe all ſuch acts were " to the prejudice of the ſaid trade*."

Does

The Section of the Act here referred to is the following:

* " Be it further enacted by the authority aforeſaid, that no commander or maſter of any ſhip trading to Africa, ſhall, by fraud, force, or violence,

"Does not this, at leaſt, introduce ſome modeſt doubts into the minds of thoſe young gentlemen, when they learn the authority under which this trade has flouriſhed, and when they find they are at iſſue with all that is great and honourable in this country? Theſe are the opinions to which I am attached, yet I will not ſay that I had rather be wrong with ſuch men than right with others, but I will ſay, that I would heſitate long before I would go in direct oppoſition to their ſentiments. Sir, I would not haſtily reprobate thoſe who are adhering to the principles of their anceſtors, who are lingering over the wiſdom of their illuſtrious predeceſſors; at leaſt, I could not approve of treating the deciſions of their judgment with ſo little ceremony as has been done on the preſent occaſion. There are ſome opinions, upon which, from my own diffidence of myſelf, I am inclined to place ſome reliance, and in the confidence that others will feel the like reſpect, I will again appeal to the young gentlemen around me, and aſk them whether, after all the arguments that have been uſed in the Houſe, and after all that has been publiſhed on this ſubject, they feel no heſitation in extinguiſhing for ever this branch of Britiſh commerce? Do they not know, that two men, not only independent in their ſentiments, but wholly unconnected with Weſt-India merchants, and Weſt-India intereſts, perſons who had travelled into Africa, and who knew intimately the atrocities deſcribed; I ſay of theſe two individuals, the one declared he was in doubt as to the fitneſs of the trade, and the other, explicitly avowed his conviction of its propriety and utility. What, have viſited the ſpot where ſuch cruelties are committed, have no Weſt-India eſtate to bias their judgments, and come

violence, or by any other indirect practice whatſoever, take on board, or carry away from the coast of Africa, any negro or native of the ſaid country, or commit, or ſuffer to be committed, any violence on the natives to the prejudice of the ſaid trade; and that every perſon ſo offending, ſhall, for every ſuch offence, forfeit the ſum of £100. of lawful money of Great Britain; one moiety thereof to the uſe of the ſaid company hereby eſtabliſhed, and their ſucceſſors for and towards maintaining the ſaid forts and ſettlements, and the other moiety to and for the uſe of him or them who ſhall inform or ſue for the ſame." 23 Geo. II. c. 31. ſ. 29.

back

back and have a doubt of it! To be ſent out with all their prejudices againſt the trade, and to return home with a doubt! Who were theſe men? They were Mr. PARKE and Mr. BRUCE; Mr. PARKE ſaw one end of Africa, and Mr. BRUCE the other. I have before taken the liberty of mentioning, what were the opinions of Mr. PARKE, and what were my notions of his ſentiments. Mr. EDWARDS was the editor of the book he publiſhed, and he was always a man ſo much addicted to vacillation in his judgment, that we cannot at all tell how to draw any concluſions from him. This gentleman had a greater ſhare of genius than of wiſdom, he had more of the rhetorican than of the logician. On matters of buſineſs, he was always in a ſtate of vibration, never fixed, never deciſive.

"Now when I mention one of the commentators upon PARKE, I ſhall name a man who has done honour to the age and country in which he lives; who is read by all, and in the hands of every body. I did ſay that I was ignorant whether Mr. MALTHUS were a friend to the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, or not. What does Mr. MALTHUS ſay? He ſpeaks broadly of the inceſſant interruptions to the progreſſive population of Africa, and he tells you diſtinctly, that until the rights of property ſhall be aſcertained and enforced, it will be in vain to look for greater happineſs among the natives of that continent. But I ſhall be told, that it is the Slave-Trade that prevents this. I ſhall be glad to hear, if any reſpectable authority can be produced, which ſays, that the Slave Trade is the cauſe of the miſeries of Africa, and of the wars there. With regard to the ancient authorities collected from what was written before the Slave Trade began, I have heard the 7th book of Leo Africanus, cited by an honourable member, who ſaid, that this author favoured his conſtruction, and I am not ſure that he will not find a paſſage or two ſcattered here and there, which may confirm his doctrine. But, Sir, looking at this work, what do we learn from it reſpecting the condition of Africa at an early period? Leo Africanus does ſtate, that wars prevailed, both for the purpoſes of conqueſt and plunder. He ſays, that very great

cruelties

cruelties were practiſed, that there was an open ave market, that the inhabitants were expoſed to ſale there, and that they were ſold for the profit of the king. Fifteen or twenty of them were given for one horſe; horſes were the object of this traffic, becauſe the prince who poſſeſſed moſt horſes, was the moſt powerful in war. With theſe extracts, I leave the honourable gentleman to the full uſe of the few paragraphs he may find capable of bearing a different conſtruction.

"But I will not purſue the path I travelled before. Whatever may have been advanced in the courſe of theſe debates, one fact is capable of inconteſtible proof, that ſlavery has been practiſed for ages; that there is no new evil in it in our own time, and in our own country.

"If we were now to begin again to form communities, and if it were aſked if ſlavery ſhould form a claſs of ſociety amongſt us, I do not ſay that I ſhould be diſpoſed to permit it. If I were one in a committee formed to report upon ſuch a ſubject, I would take the rights of man into my conſideration, and would reflect on the inconvenience of ſuch an order of perſons in a ſtate of ſociety under ſettled laws. Unfortunately, this is not the condition of our colonies; the ſtate of ſociety is formed in our iſlands; they are cultivated and ſupported by the labour of ſlaves. Yet the evil of the Slave Trade is not extenſively felt; the ſupply is now limited; it is confined to our own colonies; with the improvements adopted, it would be reduced to a trifle; and the few we ſhould require would be of little diſadvantage to Africa.

"But it is ſaid, that ſlaves, to an indefinite number, are wanted for the purpoſe of extending cultivation in the iſlands. This may be the caſe with reſpect to Trinidad, and if it be ſo, it might be eaſily prevented, and ſome compenſation might be given to the parties for depriving them of the advantages they might reaſonably expect to attain. This is not the ſituation of the iſland of Jamaica. Would they extend the cultivation when they are not getting a living price for their commodity?

"When I was upon this ſubject before, I adduced a few arguments, to which I believe ſome attention was given; yet I have been a little miſunderſtood. I did not,

in the ſpirit of extravagant reform, ſay, that I would put down lotteries and ale-houſes, but I ſaid, that if you carry the principle to the extreme, an extreme which I did not approve, you muſt thus far extend your prohibition. But it is ſaid, "Why do you not put on your "armour, and mount your rozinante?" Sir, I do not affect to redreſs the grievances of all mankind; I do not want, by perſonal valour, to ſupply the deficiencies of law; but I wiſh not to carry legiſlation, as is propoſed in the preſent inſtance, beyond its due bounds.

"We compute that 15,000 perſons have been ſwept from the earth by one of thoſe tremendous efforts of nature frequent in that part of the world. Other cauſes, not ſo terrific, but equally fatal in thoſe climates, are conſtantly operating to deſtroy life. The preſent project will prevent the ſupplies for this waſte of exiſtence, and numerous families muſt be reduced to inevitable ruin. Are not theſe diſtreſſes to be avoided?

"Upon the ſubject of the female population I muſt obſerve, that it appears to me, the matter has not been underſtood. One honourable gentleman triumphantly aſked, "Have not the Weſt India planters had notice of the intention of Parliament to aboliſh the Slave Trade for 20 years, and have no precautions yet been taken for the introduction of an extraordinary number of females?" Sir, what uſe would not have been made of the fact, if a ſhip had gone to Africa excluſively for females? What pathetic deſcriptions ſhould we have had of the miſeries of the ſofter ſex? What a multitude of crimes would have been forged to awaken the generous ſenſibilities of our nature? At leaſt from the abſence of this fact we have this advantage, we have miſſed one topic of declamation.

"We are unfairly dealt with, when an argument is drawn from the aſſertion, that ſlaves are not under equal laws, and that ſuch laws cannot be applied to the ſlaves. I know that we cannot help the ſtate of ſlavery, and I have intimated, that not laws but civilization is the beſt remedy for the evils attendant upon it. But is it to be ſaid, that there are no laws in ſuch a condition of ſociety; and when we declare that there are laws, and produce our authorities, are we to be confidently told, that

they

they are of no uſe? Is it juſt to lay hold of an obſolete ſtatute paſſed 120 years ago, (in 1688) to repreſent in what a degraded ſtate the negroes are at this day? But the production of ſuch an act will have this good effect, to ſhew that upon the Britiſh ſtatute books there are laws againſt the negroes which are a diſgrace to this country. I know, Sir, that there are, and I wiſh that they were abrogated. The eſtabliſhment of wholeſome laws, however, do not always prevent crime; I am afraid, Sir, that in this country, where every man ſhould be protected by the beneficial effects of public inſtitution, atrocities daily increaſe; yet in the Weſt Indies, where we are told there is no law, crimes are rare. This, Sir, I throw out as a challenge for enquiry, and I will venture to aſſert, that there are fewer crimes in one month in the whole iſland of Jamaica, than there are in one week in the city of London.

"It was ſaid by my honourable friend on the other ſide, and I was not ſurpriſed at the aſſertion, or at his application of it to the Slave Trade; "Now, at leaſt, it cannot be ſaid, that there is a deficiency of produce in this country, or that there is an immediate want of labourers to increaſe the future ſupply." I will put a caſe that will be familiar. Now and then our great breweries, and other eſtabliſhments of the like nature, are unproductive to their proprietors. The relief propoſed to us, under the ſuperabundance of produce, is the ſame as if we were to propoſe to them, on ſuch occaſional and temporary ceſſations of the advantages of their trade, to ſell their drag horſes, to diſpoſe of their implements, and to diſcharge their ſervants. Would this be an agreeable anſwer to their complaint of the viciſſitudes of trade?

"What have the colonies done? They have furniſhed you with a large ſurplus of produce, which was what you wanted; and becauſe we cannot ſell it abroad, the prices are greatly reduced, to your benefit, and to our loſs. Rather than deprive us of the means of future advantage, ſhould you not now furniſh us with temporary funds to relieve our embarraſſments, and make the public, which derives all the advantage, ſuffer a portion of the loſs?

"And now let me put in a word or two in favour of

the Weſt-India merchants and planters. This order of perſons have the *pia mater* ormed as in other men, they are anatomically the ſame, they have feelings like thoſe of their fellows, they are, in a ſimilar degree, the creatures of aſſociation and habit, and poſſeſs the ſame moral and phyſical endowments. Are they not entitled to the ſame indulgence for their failings, and to the ſame reward for their virtues? And are their intereſts to be ſurrendered, and their hopes to be diſappointed without mercy? Sir, when you have torn out of the ſtatute book thoſe ſolemn acts of the legiſlature which have remained inviolate for 150 years, we will pick up the fragments and take them to our houſes, in the confidence that we ſhall find our juſtification in the acts of a Britiſh Parliament. But, Sir, we want no juſtification; let thoſe who legiſlate enquire how ſevere it is to blame thoſe who are the mere inſtruments of their pleaſure, and to forget the hand by which the motion of the inſtrument is directed.

"I have ſtated the bearing that the colonies have upon he maritime ſtrength of the country; but what I inſiſt upon at this time is, that you condemn the iſlands to a ſtate of inaction they never before experienced, and which muſt cauſe their ruin.

"When this meaſure comes to aſſume the ſubſtantial form of an act of legiſlation, then we may have to lament the effect from its operation, under different circumſtances to thoſe I have already explained. I think the diſcuſſion has continued for 20 years, but the ſubject has never aſſumed before ſuch a palpable ſhape. Much has been ſaid on the diſcontents likely to reſult from the deliberations in this Houſe during all that period; but, Sir, it is not the diſcuſſion which can excite diſturbances, it is the ultimate deciſion, it is the act itſelf, from which the negro will learn what is his ſituation in the eye of a Britiſh legiſlature. When he ſees the act, then the impreſſion will be produced. I do not ſay that we ſhall have nothing but blood and horrors, for I am not of a gloomy temper, and my fears are not eaſily alarmed. I am, however, told, that the inſurrection in St. Domingo was cauſed by the debates in this Houſe. Whether it be

correct

correct or not, I cannot determine; but it certainly was the opinion of the great mafs of the people of France that fuch was the caufe. I faw the accounts which were tranfmitted from the colonies, and I am fure the noble Lord (HOWICK) will admit, that he has not had his underftanding infulted by detailed hiftories of infurrections that never exifted, or by aggravated repreſentations of the effects of fuch difcuffions in Parliament, to incite the negroes to break their chains on the heads of their oppreffors,

" I will ftate another objection againft the bill, which is admitted to be an objection even by fome who favour the principle of it; for they have diftinctly faid, that if compenfation were not included in the meafure, they fhould difapprove it. I will inform thefe objectors, that there is nothing of compenfation compriſed in the bill, the queftion was ftopped in limine, and there is no pledge, no intimation of what is to be done in this refpect.

" The fupporters of this bill, inftead of promoting fuch a compenfation, preſent themfelves before us in a very different manner. They fay, " We are going to confer upon you an immenfe benefit, to which you are ftupid enough to be utterly infenfible." How graceful would it have been under fuch circumftances, without the chance of making any facrifice whatever, to have held out compenfation to allay our fears, and to fatisfy our hopes.

" But, by another party, a different argument is employed, and thefe fay we will not open the doors to fuch a claim; the whole Britifh revenue would not anfwer it. What, Sir, is it of that confequence that the whole Britifh revenue would not anfwer it, and is an intereft of this magnitude to be thus lightly and haftily difpofed of? Cannot you introduce a compenfating clauſe which will ftate, in fome fatisfactory form, the claims of the parties. If you do not like paft clauſes applied to fuch cafes, make a new one, and take care that it fhall only include actual loffes.

" When I began trade, if I had canvaffed both Houfes of Parliament, and had afked the members how I fhould lay

lay out my money moſt beneficially to myſelf, and to my country, they would have ſaid, "Lend it to the Weſt-India colonies, and furniſh them with what will return to you a large ſurplus of profit, and to the ſtate a large ſurplus of revenue. We have ſanctioned the trade by our acts, you may ſecurely involve all your property in it."

"In the ſame reign you are reverſing the ſtatutes that have been paſſed, on which that ſecurity is founded, and you are not holding out a ſolitary pledge of compenſation.

"One evil conſequence will be, that you will diſcourage the ſpirit of adventure, becauſe you are removing the ſafeguards neceſſary to commercial ſpeculation.

"Contractors may increaſe while the revenue diminiſhes; but this is not the claſs of traders to which I refer: I allude to thoſe who bring a ſubſtantial revenue to your treaſury, and ſuch muſt neceſſarily decreaſe. Without confidence in the legiſlature, it is impoſſible that they can continue their commercial engagements. Here will be one inſtance of a trade ſanctioned by the higheſt authority, which is haſtily to be withdrawn from the region of ſpeculation, and all the reſt may be ſubjected to the ſame viciſſitude.

"An opinion was held out by an honourable Baronet, (Sir PHILIP FRANCIS) whom I do not now ſee in his place, and it was ſo much in the extreme, that I ſhall think it neceſſary to ſay little regarding it. I think he had no reference to the African part of the queſtion, and that he applied his remark excluſively to the ſituation of Trinidad; and he did ſay, that all thoſe who were partakers of this deteſtable traffic, ought to be out of the protection of the law. The honourable Baronet made no diſtinction between creditors who had lent their money, or planters who directed their induſtry to the culture of the iſlands, but all that were concerned, either directly or indirectly, in the purchaſe of a ſlave, were to be, according to the enthuſiaſm of his feelings, out of the protection of the law. This, Sir, is not conſiſtent with my ideas of humanity or juſtice.

"I have only a word to ſay more to thoſe, of my friends, who have eſtates in theſe colonies, and who

differ

differ from me in their opinion on this ſubject. I am convinced that they ſpeak with the ſame frankneſs that I do, whatever variation there may be in our mode of thinking. It may be ſaid, that though the planters may be convinced of the utility of this meaſure, yet the merchants who receive their conſignments will not be ſo eaſily ſatisfied. For my part I think that there would be no difference, and that the friends of the abolition would have as many converts in the one claſs as in the other. Will my honourable friends, who ſupport this meaſure, ſay that they are out of the reach of all poſſible loſs by this meaſure? I know that none of them have been miſled by flattery; but how do they feel under the charge made againſt them by the abolitioniſts? I confeſs no crime, I acknowledge no error, and plead guiltleſs of every charge for my concern in this trade. Again, I aſk, where the friends of this bill mean to ſtop? I aſk them to what romantic projects their zeal will conduct them? Do they mean that their deciſion on this bill ſhould put the queſtion at reſt? Is there to be no further intruſion on the intereſts of the Weſt Indies? Is not the alarm bell of innovation to be inceſſantly ringing in the ears of theſe unfortunate parties? Have they not heard a nobleman of the higheſt connections announce ſomething like his intention to effect the emancipation of the ſlaves in the Weſt Indies? (alluding to a propoſition of Lord PERCY's.)

" Perhaps it would have been right to have admitted this bill to proceed in ſilence, and to have allowed our property to be ſacrificed to the enthuſiaſm of the times. I am not, however, of opinion, that it would be ſo, and I ſhall not walk, as I may do through the empire, with my bag upon my back, without giving ſome reſiſtance, however feeble and ineffectual, to the cauſe of my misfortunes.

" If I have ſaid to-night what is rather the dictate of warmth and paſſion, than of reaſon and truth, I ſhall be ſorry for it to-morrow; and I hope the Houſe in its candour will contemplate it as the laſt effort in favour of an expiring friend."

" Sir PHILIP FRANCIS.—" Sir, I believe no member has a right to allude to any ſpeech which was made on a former

a former night. I did never ſay or think, that on the ſcore of this tranſaction the merchants and proprietors in the trade were to be placed out of the protection of the law: never did I utter ſuch a thing. Now for what I did ſay, and to which I adhere to this moment. I aſſerted, that it was a queſtion of compenſation for a ſuppoſed loſs, and that the claim was put in, in this ſtage of the procceding, in order to bind parliament to make compenſation for future loſſes; and I do ſay that I never would become a party to bind the Houſe to that propoſition. My propoſition was this, that no man engaged in trade or tranſactions of any kind, which the Houſe has declared to be contrary to humanity, juſtice, and ſound policy, can have any claim on the legiſlature of the country for compenſation. There never can be a juſt claim for compenſation for being deprived of the profits of any tranſactions which have been declared of a nature contrary to juſtice, humanity, and ſound policy. That is all I ſaid, and to that, as a general propoſition, I adhere.

" If you hinder me from doing ſuch and ſuch a thing which is criminal, am I to expect that you will give me a compenſation for not continuing to practiſe that crime? I ſtated that as a general propoſition, and I ſtill adhere to it; how far it applies to the caſe of the Weſt India planters or merchants, I do not ſay.

" But the honourable gentleman introduced the caſe of the iſland of Trinidad, and there I went a little further, for I admit that the other iſlands might, perhaps, by poſſibility, have ſome claim to compenſation, but I think that no right of that kind can apply to the people who have lately ſettled in Trinidad; for whatever they engaged in has been with a certain knowledge of the proceedings and intention of the Houſe; they have not long placed themſelves there, and I think therefore that they are the laſt of all who ſhould come before the parliament of Great Britain. Whatever they did, they could not pretend to ſay there had been a long preſcription or connivance in favour of the trade, but on the contrary moſt of their engagements and ſchemes were entered into and undertaken ſince the reſolution was paſſed within theſe walls, that at ſuch a time the trade ſhould be aboliſhed.

And

And if they ſhould be adviſed to appear for compenſation, as I do not think they will, I ſhall think it a ſufficient anſwer to their claims to ſay, that they did this at their own peril, with their eyes open, and then the reply will be completed, by reading to them the reſolution of the Houſe which was paſſed.

" Though, Sir, I would not admit the general claim for compenſation, I did not mean to give an univerſal negative to it, as there might be ſome circumſtances which might poſſibly give riſe to a well founded demand; when ſuch a caſe ſhall be made out, I ſhall be found as ready as any man to give relief."

Mr. LITTLETON.—" Sir, many admirable ſpeeches have been made during the courſe of this debate;—ſpeeches, which the warmeſt feelings, and moſt generous ſentiments have prompted; and it is moſt gratifying to obſerve, by what great and commanding majorities the meaſure has been carried through every ſtage. Under ſuch circumſtances, I cannot but think that it would argue the moſt preſumptive conduct in me to preſent old arguments before employed, or by what I ſhall ſay perhaps ſtrike out the recollection of that which has been ſo frequently and ſo ably urged. A few of the principal arguments I will beg leave to mention, which appear to me to be concluſive on the point. I had hopes, Sir, that it would have been agreed on all ſides, that the Slave Trade was an enormous and intolerable burden; but inſtead of this we are told, that the condition of the negroes is moſt enviable. Such a propoſition is too monſtrous to be credited, and almoſt too abſurd to be liſtened to. Is it to be ſaid for a moment, that thoſe who undergo the ſevereſt changes, and ſuffer the moſt miſerable ſervitude, are the happieſt?

" I will not treſpaſs upon the patience of the Houſe by adverting to ſuch ſubjects, or by treating them with any thing but contempt. When we have ſuch ſtatements made, is it poſſible that we ſhould heſitate for a moment to declare, that this trade is moſt unjuſt; and it will never be a ſubject of regret with me, that the preamble of the bill declares that it is ſo.

" It is, in the nature of things, impoſſible that we ſhould make a compromiſe with the Weſt India planters on this occaſion. We know, Sir, that when we are threatened by the dreadful conſequences of which honourable members tell us, theſe are not derived from a ſpirit of propheſy, but merely ariſe from the deſire of giving oppoſition to the meaſure before the Houſe. To me, I confeſs, the queſtion appears to lie in a very ſmall compaſs, for it has been proved long ago, that the population of the iſlands, in ſome caſes, has not decreaſed, but increaſed, and the only reaſon for the decreaſe is, that it has been the effect of tyranny; for the moſt ungenial climate never produced ſuch a diminution in any part of the world, and therefore we may fairly preſume, that it proceeds in the Weſt Indies from hardſhip.

" But we are threatened by thoſe who have ſpoken againſt the bill with inſurrections in our colonies, from the ſtrong expreſſions in its preamble. To that argument, Sir, a ſufficient anſwer has already been given. Much has been ſaid likewiſe on the manner in which this queſtion has been treated. We have been told that the ſubject has been urged with great want of candour: although it has now been above twenty years under the conſideration of Parliament, yet they ſay it has not been ſufficiently ſtated. Another ſubject which has fallen under the obſervation of the oppoſite ſide, and which has been cenſured by them in the ſtrongeſt terms is, the popular feeling; but I think it will be allowed by all parties, that there are caſes in which the popular feeling is to be conſulted, for it ſeems to be implanted in the breaſts of all mankind, for the beſt of purpoſes. It is that which leads them to ſhake the unweildy pillars of an overgrown and oppreſſive government, and to undermine the foundations by which a ſtate of tyranny is ſupported.

" Under theſe impreſſions, cannot eaſily believe that the conſequences ſuppoſed will actually take place, or that they are in fact to be dreaded; and I ſhall give my vote in favour of the abolition, while I do ſo, not doubting that the Legiſlature has properly conſidered the proſperity and welfare of the colonies; for it has been

correctly

correctly ſaid, that true happineſs depends not only upon the poſſeſſion of enjoyment ourſelves, but alſo upon the diffuſion of it to others."

Mr. HENRY THORNTON.—" Having been, in ſome degree, a fellow-labourer with my honourable friend (Mr. WILBERFORCE) in this great cauſe, I am unwilling to let the preſent bill proceed to its laſt ſtage without requeſting permiſſion to trouble the Houſe upon the ſubject; and as I conſider the ſucceſs of the bill as ſure, I ſhall endeavour chiefly to touch on thoſe topics on which it may be moſt uſeful to inſiſt under our preſent circumſtances. The honourable gentleman (Mr. HIBBERT) whom I roſe to anſwer, and to whom I would now more particularly addreſs myſelf, appears to me to have thrown together a few deſultory remarks rather than to have diſcuſſed the leading characters of the meaſure. Whether Leo Africanus, in thoſe writings which he left ſome centuries ago, expreſſed himſelf favourably or unfavourably as to the abolition of the Slave Trade, (a point on which I apprehend that little is to be ſaid on either ſide) or whether even Mr. PARKE was for or againſt it, is in my mind of no great importance. It ſurely becomes us who are legiſlators to reaſon indeed upon their facts, but to exerciſe our own judgment. In this place, however, it occurs to me to remark, that in converſing, as I once did, with Mr. PARKE, upon this ſubject, he obſerved to me, that he conceived himſelf not called upon to treat of the morality of the trade in ſlaves in writing his book; but that undoubtedly he conſidered it as a queſtion which could not bear a moment's argument on any ground, either of humanity or juſtice.

" I am ſanguine enough, Sir, to expect great good from this meaſure both to Africa and to the Weſt Indies. It will open, as the noble Lord (Lord HENRY PETTY) expreſſed it, the only *wide door* to the civilization of Africa, and in my conception, it will, in the long run, be ſcarcely leſs ſerviceable to the Weſt Indies. And here I would particularly addreſs myſelf to the Weſt India gentlemen, for, though undoubtedly, I have been much more familiar with the African part of the queſtion than

with any other, I conceive that the diſcuſſion of the Weſt Indian branch of it may be peculiarly uſeful. It may tend to conciliate the minds of Weſt India gentlemen to a meaſure which they muſt now ſee to be inevitable, and may ſuggeſt the means of following up that meaſure, and promoting the final benefits intended by it.

" In order then to conciliate them to the meaſure, I would aſk whether our interference in theſe intereſts of the Weſt Indian colonies is not juſtified by the ſame great and general principles which leads us to provide for the welfare of all our foreign poſſeſſions and eſtabliſhments. We are a country which ſtands oppoſed to a great continental power, and we muſt derive the hope of forming a balance againſt that power chiefly from the ſtrength of our colonies. We ought then to place our colonies on a footing of the greateſt poſſible ſecurity and permanence. In the infancy of colonial ſettlements, many an evil incident to them eſcapes our obſervation, but when they grow conſiderable thoſe evils alſo encreaſe, and our attention is naturally awakened It has accordingly happened, that in the Eaſt Indies, where great abuſes at one time prevailed, very important reforms have been eſtabliſhed. We have lately rendered permanent the rights to the ſoil enjoyed by the native Zemindar or land owner. We have fixed the utmoſt amount of his land-tax or rent. We have added regulations in favour of the native labourer or cultivator, with the view of ſecuring him from the oppreſſion of his immediate ſuperior. We have alſo eſtabliſhed a purer adminiſtration of juſtice. By thus improving the happineſs of the natives of thoſe extenſive territories, which is undoubtedly our great and paramount duty as a preſiding legiſlature, we have both added to the ſecurity of thoſe poſſeſſions, and have improved our title to them.

" In Ireland alſo we have endeavoured and are endeavouring (it matters little to the preſent queſtion with what degree of wiſdom or ſucceſs) to improve the condition of the great maſs of the population, and thus to add to the ſtrength of the empire. In our own country too, an honourable gentleman of weight and reſpectability, (Mr. WHITBREAD) is ſuggeſting meaſures not only for the

the amendment of our poor laws, but for the general elevation of the character of our common people. Can then the Weſt India gentlemen be ſurprized if parliament ſhould have an eye to the ſtate alſo of ſociety in the Weſt Indies. Will they ſay that the ſyſtem is there ſo perfect, that the due gradations of rank are ſo well eſtabliſhed, that the principles recommended by the beſt writers on political œconomy are ſo exemplified, and the happineſs of the great maſs of the population (the object which, as I ſaid before, ought ever to be the primary conſideration of a legiſlature) is ſo effectually provided for, that nothing remains to be done in this reſpect in our Weſt India ſettlements.

" I will proceed to touch briefly on a few of the leading characters of the preſent Weſt Indian ſlavery. I agree generally with the honourable gentleman behind me, (Mr. LITTLETON) that it is a ſyſtem probably more ſevere than ever before prevailed in any part of the known world. I wiſh, however, to enter into ſome detail of facts in ſupport of this general aſſertion, and to join iſſue with Weſt Indian gentlemen on this particular ſubject. And firſt, Sir, I would remark that the Weſt Indian ſlave is called to his labour an hour before ſunriſe, which he leaves an hour after ſunſet, having an interval, as I underſtand, of only about two hours reſpite for his meals, and that he has no exemption from the neceſſity of labouring on Sundays; and that in crop time, which occupies a large portion of the year, his hours of labour are conſiderably more, four or five hours only being allowed for ſleep during much of this period. The frame of man does not allow of a degree of labour ſuch as this in tropical climates. There the earth readily yields its produce, but the human body is incapable of the ſame exertion as in colder countries.

" The next circumſtance which I ſhall ſtate will ſerve to confirm the truth of the preceding remark. The Weſt Indian ſlave *works under the whip*. I wiſh that ſome gentleman acquainted with the Weſt Indies would furniſh us with an accurate deſcription of the meaning of this term. I underſtand by it, that a black perſon attends every gang of negroes in the field, having a large whip not leſs

powerful

powerful than our cart whip, either in his hand or coiled round his neck, to the occaſional ſtroke of which whip all the working ſlaves are ſubject. Old and young, males and females, girls of a ſomewhat tender age, and women in a ſtate of pregnancy, with the exception, indeed, as I have underſtood, of commonly two months freedom from field labour antecedently to their delivery, but of only one month's exemption in the caſe of the ſlaves of an honourable gentleman (Mr. FULLER, who mentioned this exemption of *one* month granted to his pregnant ſlaves in proof of the peculiar humanity of his particular ſyſtem. I do not ſay that this whip is conſtantly or even frequently applied. I affirm, however, that all are *liable* to it. The cattle in this country which are worked under the whip do not neceſſarily feel it. Much depends on the temper of the perſon having command over them. So is it with the ſlaves in the Weſt Indies. What I aſſert is, that they occaſionally feel the whip, that it is allowed to be employed at the direction of the mere driver, in order to quicken diligence, and is not reſorted to merely in the way of puniſhment after an offence committed and regularly heard and decided upon by the white overſeer of the eſtate. Now, is this the caſe, Sir, or has it ever been the caſe under any other ſpecies of ſlavery? Is it the caſe in Africa? Far from it. There the ſlaves in general labour only occaſionally; and as we are aſſured, both by Mr. PARKE and others, are ſcarcely diſtinguiſhable from their maſters; yet it has been aſſumed, that becauſe the ſame man may have been a ſlave in Africa, there is no hardſhip in converting him into a ſlave under the Weſt Indian ſyſtem. The very uſe of the whip, and the general ſyſtem of coercion, which is pleaded for as ſo neceſſary in the Weſt Indies, prove that the ſlave had not been accuſtomed to the ſame ſeverity of labour in his native country. This practice of working under the whip was totally unknown, as I conceive, under the ſyſtem of Grecian and Roman ſlavery.

" Again, as to civil right, the Weſt Indian ſlave, I ſay, has none. He is in the eye of the law not a perſon, but a thing; he may be the *ſubject* of contract, but he cannot either contract or be contracted with. Of pro-

perty,

perty, legally ſpeaking, he can have none. I am aware, that through the forbearance and humanity of particular maſters, a ſlave may have the actual poſſeſſion and uſe of property. He has, however, nothing like that peculium which the Roman law aſſured to the Roman ſlaves. The property which he has may be ſeized in order to diſcharge the debts of his maſter. Both he himſelf, indeed, and his property, may be ſold together for the ſatisfaction of the maſter's creditor. He may be torn from all his connections, as well as from the little houſe and furniture which he had occupied, and may be transferred to a new place and new maſter, as indeed, the ſlave often is, exactly after the manner of goods or cattle taken in execution.

" In reſpect to the criminal code of the iſlands, I admit, that in ſome reſpects, it is more favourable to the ſlave than that of ancient times. The maſter undoubtedly has not the power of life and death, nor of maiming or mutilating his ſlave, nor of inflicting more than a certain quantity of puniſhment. When, however, the difference of colour is taken into contemplation, a difference which leads to a contempt of the ſlave unknown in the early ages, and when it is conſidered alſo, that no black man is admitted as evidence in the Weſt Indies, and that the negroes conſtitute almoſt the whole population in moſt of the places in which they live, every gentleman, as I think, muſt ſee that the criminal laws in favour of the ſlave can be little more than a name, the want of all poſſibility of bringing forward evidence operating, as I underſtand, not in nine caſes only out of ten, but in forty-nine out of fifty, or in ninety-nine out of a hundred.

" On the moral degradation of the negroe ſlave, on the total want of a legal proviſion for his religious inſtruction, on the neglect of the inſtitution of marriage, and on all the concomitant evils, it is unneceſſary to dwell, ſince theſe are allowed and well known. I now return therefore to the obſervation which I before made. I aſk whether this is not a ſyſtem of ſlavery more ſeverely operating on thoſe who are ſubject to it, than any which has been before known in the world? I do not accuſe the Weſt Indian gentleman of particular inhumanity. I am

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of opinion, that the ancient maſters much exceeded them in acts of individual barbarity. This is a leſs cruel, but it is alſo a more calculating age. The ſeverity of the Weſt Indian ſlavery ariſes out of the commercial ſpirit. The ſlave is employed in a ſpecies of manufacture. Sugar, in particular, is an article which it requires much labour to produce, and the profit on the ſpeculation depends upon the exceſs of the price of the commodity created above thoſe high charges which are neceſſary to the creation of it. Every ſaving effected in the rate of theſe heavy charges is therefore of great importance in the ſpeculation, and the ſeverity of the labour ſeems to reſult out of this circumſtance. On the other hand, the Roman ſlave, who was employed on the paſture or arable land of a maſter whoſe rents in any caſe would be conſiderable, could be allowed ſome relaxation of his toil, and hence, probably, though the particular cruelties might be more ſhocking, the ordinary preſſure would be leſs conſiderable. It is the *ſyſtem* therefore of which I complain, and of the unqueſtionable hardſhip of the ſyſtem can there be a greater proof than is given by that aſſertion of our opponents themſelves, namely, that the ſlaves cannot maintain their numbers?

" Of the tendency of this bill then to improve the condition of the ſlaves, I can have no doubt. When the further ſupply of ſlaves ſhall be prohibited, the planters will be compelled to take more care of thoſe whom they already have. All this is according to the common principles of human nature; and I am remarkably fortified in my ſuppoſition by the paſt experience of the world. Slavery, Sir, as we all know, prevailed in a very great degree in the Roman world, but within a few ages after the Chriſtian æra it gradually diſappeared. The extinction of the Roman ſlavery is to be aſcribed chiefly to the circumſtance of the world having come for the moſt part under one maſter, and to the conſequent ceſſation of thoſe wars which had furniſhed the ſupply of the Roman ſlave market. This privation of the ſupply led to the melioration of their condition much in the ſame manner in which I truſt that the privation of the African ſupply will lead to the meliora-
tion of the condition of our ſlaves in the Weſt Indies. But
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in order that I may not be thought to ſpeak without ſufficient authorities upon this point, I beg to be allowed to read a paſſage from a modern author, deſcriptive of the circumſtance in queſtion, an author, who having written antecedently to the deſcription of this ſubject, cannot be ſuſpected of any particular prejudice on the ſide of my opinions. [Mr. H. THORNTON then proceeded to read the following paſſage from Gibbon's Roman Hiſtory.]

"But," (ſays this author) "there ſtill remained in the centre of every province, and of every family, an unhappy condition of men who endured the weight, without ſharing the benefits of ſociety. In the free ſtates of antiquity, the domeſtic ſlaves were expoſed to the wanton rigour of deſpotiſm. The perfect ſettlement of the Roman empire was preceded by ages of violence and rapine. The ſlaves conſiſted, for the moſt part, of barbarian captives, taken in thouſands by the chance of war, purchaſed at a vile price, accuſtomed to a life of independence, and impatient to break and to revenge their fetters. Againſt ſuch internal enemies, whoſe deſperate inſurrections had more than once reduced the republic to the brink of deſtruction, the moſt ſevere regulations, and the moſt cruel treatment ſeemed almoſt juſtified by the great law of ſelf-preſervation. *But when the principal natives of Europe, Aſia, and Africa, were united under the laws of one Sovereign, the ſource of foreign ſupplies flowed with much leſs abundance, and the Romans were reduced to the milder, but more tedious method of propagation.* In their numerous families, and particularly in their country eſtates, they encouraged the marriage of their ſlaves. The ſentiments of nature, the habits of education, and the poſſeſſion of a dependent ſpecies of property, contributed to alleviate the hardſhips of ſervitude. The exiſtence of a ſlave became an object of greater value, and though his happineſs ſtill depended on the temper and circumſtances of the maſter, the humanity of the latter, inſtead of being reſtrained by fear, was encouraged by the ſenſe of his own intereſt. The juriſdiction of life and death over the ſlaves, a power long exerciſed and often abuſed, was taken out of private hands and reſerved to the magiſtrates alone. The ſubterraneous priſons were aboliſhed, and upon a juſt complaint of in-

tolerable treatment, the injured ſlave obtained either his deliverance or a leſs cruel maſter Hope, the beſt comfort of our imperfect condition, was not denied to the Roman ſlave; and if he had any opportunity of rendering himſelf either uſeful or agreeable, he might very naturally expect, that the diligence and fidelity of a few years, would be rewarded with the ineſtimable gift of freedom. The freemen, however, obtained at firſt no more than the private rights of citizens, and were originally excluded from civil or military honours, nor were the traces of a ſervile origin allowed to be completely obliterated, till the third or fourth generation."

"And now, Sir, I aſk whether this is mere theory. We are called theoriſts; and yet I will venture to obſerve, that we ground our reaſoning from firſt to laſt, either on the known and broad principles of human nature, or on doctrines univerſally admitted, or on the evidence of hiſtory and general experience, while our opponents chiefly reſt their cauſe on deſultory obſervations and inſulated facts. Is it theory to ſay that if men decreaſe in numbers, in a climate congenial to them, ſome ill uſage is to be preſumed? Is it theory to affirm, that a milder treatment will conduce to an augmentation of their numbers? Or is it theory to obſerve, as Mr. Gibbon has obſerved, that the limitation of the ſupply of ſlaves will conduce to a milder treatment? Truths of this kind ought to be laid up in the mind of every legiſlator, and we are not qualified for our political duties if we are unprovided with maxims like theſe, or are afraid to act upon them. Again, Sir, we ſay, that Africans are men, and, as ſuch, are capable of civilization. That part of our race, which has been deſtitute of all advantages of education, preſents an appearance of ignorance, which thoſe, who have not conſidered the ſubject, are very apt to miſtake for incapacity. Our opponents have fallen into this error, but the Africans, as we affirm, have not had their fair chance; and it may perhaps be uſeful now to ſtate, briefly, the circumſtances which ſeem to have hitherto kept down the African continent ſo much below the level of the other great quarters of the world. Here indeed I feel that I am going to be guilty

guilty of ſome plagiariſm from a work of my honourable friend, (Mr. WILBERFORCE.) The point, however, is one which it is ſo uſeful to make known, that I ſhall offer no apology to him for poſſibly anticipating what he will much better deſcribe. Civilization, I proceed then to obſerve, Sir, has always been promoted in the world chiefly by the communication of light from a civilized to a barbarous people. It has made ſcarcely any progreſs, when the knowledge of one generation has merely been improved upon by its ſucceſſors, without the benefit of foreign aid. Thus the Greeks borrowed from the Egyptians or Phœnicians, the Romans from the Greeks, and Europe was civilized by being made ſubject to the Roman power. It was thus that our own knowledge of arts and ſciences was acquired; and when the Mahometan power aroſe, and extended itſelf towards the north, it found in Europe a people antecedently civilized by the Romans, and the conquerors therefore were, in that quarter, inſtructed in the arts by the men whom they ſubdued. But when the ſame power made its way towards the ſouth, an uncivilized people were ſubjected to a nation almoſt equally rude, and thus the northern tribes of Africa did not partake of the civilization of Europe. The Mahometan conquerors were alſo checked in their progreſs by the great deſart. A little light, however, broke into the continent of Africa through the medium of the Mahometans; for it is remarkable that, at this time, the African tribes, which are the moſt advanced in knowledge, profeſs the Mahomedan religion. It might ſeem reaſonable to expect, that the civilization, which was thus hindered from entering freely by the north, would penetrate into Africa through the coaſt, during the intercourſe of more than a hundred years. But what means of knowledge have we communicated through that quarter? Who are the perſons whom we have planted upon her ſhores? They have been mere ſlave factors, or ſlave captains; the mates, perhaps, of ſlave ſhips, or perſons below the rank of mates; the worſt refuge of our ſociety; many of them men who preferred African manners to the more reſtrained habits of this country, and had no higher ambition than to carry

on a trade in their fellow creatures. Are we then entitled, under ſuch circumſtances, to ſay, that Africa is incapable of civilization?

"And here I am led to touch upon that branch of this queſtion, which is much the moſt familiar to me, I mean the African part of it. I will not, however, detain the Houſe by much diſcuſſion of it. I ſhall chiefly obſerve, that ſo far as my knowledge of Africa extends, ſlaves are generally procured, not by means which can, in any ſenſe, be termed honeſt or legitimate, but by thoſe which are the moſt corrupt and miſchievous. Debts may ſeem a fair ſource of ſlavery; but when it is conſidered how ſyſtematically men are invited to involve themſelves in debt, in order to juſtify the ſeizure of their perſons, and indeed alſo the perſons of all their connections and dependents, the evils with which this principle of ſiezing for debt is pregnant become very ſtriking. Crimes may be thought a fair ground, but the crimes are imputed with a view to the profit on the conviction. Wars may be deemed a legitimate ſource of ſlavery, but the Slave Trade alſo produces the wars, which are made the juſtification of it. I do not deny that there are many African wars which, by no means, originate in the Slave Trade. Thoſe wars, however, which the common paſſions of men have excited, ſeldom fail to be extended by it." [Mr. T. here read ſome paſſages in a letter of Mr. Ludlam, Governor of Sierra Leone, in which that gentleman deſcribes an extenſive ſcene of deſolation, very recently produced in the neighbourhood of the river Sherbro to the ſouth of Sierra Leone, by a war between the king of that country and the proprietor of the Iſle of Bananas; and though the war had at firſt reſpected a diſputed territory, the prodigious depopu ation was ſhewn to have been occaſioned by the temptation which had continually preſented itſelf, to purſue hoſtilities for the ſake of the profit of making captives.]

"When, therefore, (continued Mr. THORNTON,) I contemplate the character of this commerce, I feel compelled to ſay, as I once before obſerved in this Houſe, that I view it in the light not ſo much of a trade as of a crime, and it is a crime which Parliament is now loudly

called

called upon to reſtrain in the ſame manner, in which it reſtrains other crimes which are, from time to time, diſcovered to have grown up in ſociety. And let us not forget, Sir, that this is the great end for which Parliament is conſtituted. We ſeem indeed to meet from year to year, in order to provide for the current ſervices, and to ſupport the commerce, the agriculture, and the revenues of the country. The neceſſity of new laws, for theſe purpoſes, recurs continually; and becauſe we are occupied by objects of this kind, we do not ſufficiently bear in mind, that the primary end for which every legiſlature exiſts, is that of providing for the ſafety of the perſons and property of men in ſociety. But ought we merely to prevent one Engliſh ſubject from doing violence to another. Ought we not generally to prevent man from preying upon man? Ought we not to reſtrain the violences of our countrymen in every quarter of the globe? We poſſeſs an extenſive commerce, and we profeſs to act on higher principles than other countries. Ought we not then to make our juſtice coextenſive with our trade, and to carry our principles to every ſhore to which our veſſels are found to viſit? Ought we not to aim at a high reputation in this reſpect, as well as a reputation for commercial opulence and maritime ſtrength? It is no anſwer to ſay, that Mr. LOCKE, or other men of great name, permitted the Slave Trade to exiſt, the queſtion is, whether that trade is not the crime which has been aſſerted, and whether it does not belong to us to reſtrain it by laws adequate to the purpoſe? The abolition, when the ſubject is well examined, proves alſo to be juſt as conſiſtent with expediency as with juſtice. It is as good for the Weſt Indies as for Africa. It tends to place ſociety on its proper footing in each place. It reſtores the order of nature in both hemiſpheres.

"It has been aſſumed, that the abolition of the trade will lead to the murder of the ſlaves, for whom the African owners find no market. This effect, however, did not follow at the time of the American war, when there was an almoſt total ceſſation of the commerce, nor in the late war when the trade was alſo greatly reduced.

Many

Many ſlaves, intended for ſale, were then turned to the purpoſes of agriculture.

" Perhaps it may be thought by ſome gentlemen, that the ill ſucceſs of the endeavours made at Sierra Leone to communicate civilization to the Africans is an anſwer to ſome part of my obſervations. It is not neceſſary now to enter largely into that ſubject. I would, however, requeſt gentlemen to remember, that we have been there endeavouring to civilize not ſo much the native Africans as an untoward body of imported coloniſts, and that it is to thoſe coloniſts that we neceſſarily muſt look in a great meaſure for our inſtruments. Let it alſo be recollected, that we have been maintaining our colony, not only during a ſtate of war but alſo during the prevalence of the Slave Trade all around us; and that ſuch has been the inconſiſtency of the Parliament of this country, that it has been at once barbarizing with its right hand and civilizing with its left. I am, however, far from ſaying that the Abolition of the Slave Trade will produce at once any great and obvious conſequences: the benefit, however great and certain, may not be immediate. There are indeed no two points in which men are more apt to deceive themſelves than that of over eſtimating the inſtant effects of plans of civilization, and of undervaluing the remote and final conſequences.

" I truſt, Sir, that the Weſt India gentlemen will not be inattentive to the topics on which I have touched; and I have to thank the Houſe for having allowed me to detain them ſo long upon this important queſtion."

Mr. HERBERT.—" Sir, I cannot allow myſelf, without ſaying a few words, to permit a meaſure to paſs, which ſeems to carry with it ruin ſo extenſive as that which has been this night agitated. I feel, with my honourable friend near me, a little diſpoſed to complain of the ſtyle in which this ſubject has been handled. I conceive, Sir, that this queſtion muſt be conſidered, not merely upon the principles of the theoretical injuſtice of taking ſlaves from Africa, but in my opinion, the point to be decided is, how much good this bill will do to them, and how much harm it will do to us: that is, the quantum

quantum of benefit the negroes will receive under the bill, and the quantum of injury we ſhall ſuffer by it; and unleſs it be proved that a great quantum of inhumanity will be ſaved, it can be no argument to ſay, that the meaſure itſelf is unjuſt.

"I will, therefore, in the firſt place, take the queſtion, whether the benefit, which is expected to be derived from this bill, will really be accompliſhed; for abolition of the Slave Trade it certainly is not, for ſuppoſing the meaſure to be calculated to put an end to the trade in this country, it will not do it in any other; it can have no effect upon any foreign country. Ours is but a ſmall portion, and if the Slave Trade be not aboliſhed abroad, inaſmuch as the others can go on, becauſe nobody pretends that the other countries are diſinclined to proceed with it, therefore the traffic is not terminated. I believe it is the ſame with reſpect to America.

"But, Sir, it will be ſaid, perhaps, that at any rate, though it does not deſtroy the Slave Trade entirely, yet it will take away ſo much as is our ſhare of it. That, Sir, it will be ſeen it cannot do, for the only conſequence of the abolition will be, the lowering the price of ſlaves upon the coaſt. It is well known, that the moſt valuable part of the Weſt Indies, that which produces the greateſt profit, belongs to the enemy, and they cannot cultivate it, becauſe they have not capital enough to buy ſlaves, and therefore inaſmuch as the price of ſlaves is lowered on the coaſt, ſo much leſs capital will it require, and with ſo much greater facility can they bring them to their colonies to cultivate their lands; therefore I do affirm, that the meaſure is not at all calculated to effect the object deſired, to decreaſe the number of ſlaves; for the trade will ſtill be continued, and that argument would ſtill apply, if all the nations in Europe had withdrawn themſelves from the Slave Trade. It is not in my ideas poſſible, and I wonder how we can think of putting an end to the importation of ſlaves, or to the trade, while there is a market in America for them; and I am convinced, that if not a ſingle ſlave were bought for the purpoſe of trans-atlantic ſale, it would not alter the circumſtances, or diminiſh the number of negroes diſpoſed

poſed of, for they then would be ſold to other maſters, for we do know that there are other markets as well as ours, which takes only a very ſmall portion: the empire of Morocco has an immenſe trade in ſlaves, and great numbers of others are carried to markets in the interior of Africa in almoſt unknown empires; and therefore it is plain, that our quitting the trade would make a very trifling difference as to the number of the ſlaves, though in our markets there are the richeſt buyers, which cauſes us to be firſt attended to.

"On the nature of the wars much has been ſaid; but it will be found, that beſides the wars between different ſtates and contending princes, there are individual wars, the ſole object of which is to take ſlaves and to ſell them. In the hiſtory of our own empire we learn, that among the clans of Scotland in former ages, thoſe who carried away moſt cattle, or obtained the greateſt number of priſoners, by any means, obtained the higheſt honors; and even if there was not afforded for the Africans a good market for their ſlaves, yet it muſt notwithſtanding, for ever continue to be a war for ſlaves. This is even carried on in Europe at the preſent moment, at the time I am ſpeaking, for the general object of nations at war is, to put the adverſe country in ſuch a ſituation as not to be able to brave the war again. The great conqueror of the preſent day has done the like; he has not captured helpleſs women and infant children, but he has deſtroyed the nations, by taking away their men who are its defence, and the ſource of its power. When an African king goes to war with a neighbouring kingdom, the only riches of the two countries are, the men and horſes they poſſeſs, and the only phyſical force which each nation has to ſupport its government, conſiſts in the former. Their object is, when they engage, to take as many arms, and as great a number of men as poſſible; and if this were not the caſe, in a few weeks afterwards, the conquered country, by the rapid growth of the Indian corn to ſupply them with proviſions, would again be able to appear in the field; for when once the ſpear, and the arm that carries it, are taken away, they are no longer able to contend. But why do they do this? The

African

African prince makes his advantage of the priſoners; he takes and he ſells them to thoſe who want them, and if he cannot diſpoſe of them, he takes them, and applies them to his own uſe, and therefore the only difference is, in the kind of warfare, that of the African princes being, perhaps, more cruel; and I am far from denying, that there may be at ſome time ſuch a glut of ſlaves as to make maſſacres neceſſary in ſome caſes. But I do not intend by any means to ſay, that withdrawing the market for ſlaves afforded by our country, will have the effect of producing a maſſacre, becauſe it cannot prevent their being ſold to other purchaſers. The markets to which they may afterwards go, may, perhaps, not anſwer ſo well as ours to the ſlave dealers, but all I aſſert is, that by aboliſhing the trade we ſhall, in no great meaſure, alter the interior ſituation of Africa, and if it do not execute that, it will be allowed that the bill does not perform any great end of humanity.

"Sir, a great deal has been ſaid about ſlavery in the Weſt Indies, and a great many ſpeeches have been made to the heart; and it has been urged, that no perſon who poſſeſſes the feelings of a man, could witneſs the ſcenes which are diſplayed in the Weſt Indies, or even take the part which I do in this debate. Notwithſtanding, however, the decided opinion I maintain and expreſs in the diſcuſſion, I ſhall take upon myſelf to aſſert, that I have a heart as feelingly alive to the intereſts and welfare of my fellow-creatures, as any man in the Houſe. I have had too the benefit of experience; I have witneſſed the ſcenes the barbarity of which has been ſo much complained of; I have been in moſt of the colonies belonging to the different kingdoms of Europe, and if I had beheld what has been repreſented, I ſhould have ſhuddered; but to my great joy, I never have ſeen any thing like what has been ſtated, for I never witneſſed any caſes where a great alteration in the ſituation of the negroes was neceſſary. I did not ſee the oppreſſing tyrant, or the groaning ſlaves, ſuffering under the ſevereſt torments; for if I had, I hope I ſhould be one of the laſt in this Houſe, to eſpouſe the cauſe which I undertake. If it had been to be witneſſed at all, I ſhould not have ſeen it in the Weſt

Indies, but in Africa, where the ſituation of the ſlaves is ſo truly miſerable. The ſlaves have even told me in our colonies, that the whip of the white man was to be ſure bad enough, but that the laſh of the black maſter was a ſcourge of ſcorpions; and if I were allowed to change the word ſlave into another term, which is the chief argument on the other ſide, I might more correctly deſignate the ſituation of the negroes in our iſlands as that of labourers; and a more contented body of labourers I never ſaw in all my life; and I do not think that it is any very groſs libel upon the peaſantry ſupporting themſelves by their daily labour in this country to ſay, that I believe the blacks, upon my honour, to be full as happy as the lower claſſes of people in England.

"Sir, we have been told, that the abolition of this trade and the non-importation of negroes into our iſlands, will be of conſiderable benefit to the Weſt Indies, and that they will tend greatly to ameliorate the eſtates of the planters. It is ſaid, that they are unacquainted with what is for their own advantage; that they conſult not their own intereſts; and that they know nothing of their buſineſs. I do conceive, however, without taking up too much time of the Houſe, by dwelling long upon this point, that I could ſet the matter clear by a few words. I do apprehend, that the advantages derived to this country from the iſlands and colonies, are ſo very great from many concurring circumſtances, that nothing but the want of capital can prevent our enemies from entering into ſpeculations of the ſame nature, and that nothing but our ſuperior capital will at all enable us, in the event of a peace, to keep pace in our commodities with the markets of other European nations; and it is convincing to me, that if there were a poſſibility of their raiſing and employing a capital in bringing negroes to their colonies, and thus impeding us; in proportion as we were impeded, they would be benefited and aſſiſted in the cultivation of their iſlands, and the ſale of their produce. The queſtion is, not who makes the greateſt quantity of the ſugar that comes to market, but the point for deciſion is, who makes all the ſugar? I am convinced, that the reſtriction of the importation of ſlaves into our iſlands will

will have ſuch an effect, that we ſhall not be able to ſupply any ſugar to our own or foreign markets at all, and that not only a great detriment will take place, but that in a ſhort time, the abolition will prove the utter ruin of the colonies. The abolition, if gradual, may not perhaps in the ſame degree produce ſuch a fate, but the manner in which the bill is now propoſed to be paſſed, will undoubtedly deſtroy our poſſeſſions.

"Sir, it has been treated as an improbable circumſtance that ſuch an event ſhould happen, and we have been informed that it is not likely to occur. But I think, that without a doubt it will inevitably follow. In the firſt place you tell the negroes, "You are here in a ſtate of declared injuſtice and oppreſſion; you have been brought here without law, in a way that is tyrannical and inhuman, in ſo much as to threaten the vengeance of God upon the mother country; and yet though the bill declares this, in the Weſt Indies you muſt remain." I do really think, Sir, that a propoſal made by a noble relation of mine, was not unreaſonable by way of poſtſcript to the bill; for if you do declare that it is impious to bring them to our colonies, it muſt be doubly dangerous to tell them of it, eſpecially in the manner which is done in the preamble of this bill; for though I do not believe that the negro will read any thing of the debates which take place in the Houſe; yet let him be ever ſo ignorant it will come home to him, and he muſt learn that his maſter cannot introduce more ſlaves upon his eſtates. But it is ſaid, "Can't they read it in the public papers; can't they learn it from what is ſaid in the daily prints?" I will ſay how far they did, or did not read it. I have been among the inhabitants of St. Domingo; I beg their pardons, I mean the empire of Hayti, from the peaſant to the general; and talking one day of the reſolutions, they told me, "We did not riſe becauſe we wanted liberty, we never thought of that; we were happy under the government of the whites, but they ſent us an offer of freedom, and we accepted it, and they then tried to take it back again by force." The inſurrection in St. Domingo did not originate with the negroes, but it aroſe from the infatuation of the mother country, and the

wickedneſs of the agents, which cauſed ſolely the miſeries which have been ſubſequently endured in that iſland. There was a great number of people who were jealous of the whites, and who certainly did lend a conſiderable hand in the conteſt, and moſt of them fell with the whites; but thoſe who did not, now live in a ſtate of fear and trembling, and are in a worſe ſtate now than they ever were in before.

"I muſt beg leave here to ſtate a little anecdote which came under my own knowledge in the iſland of St. Domingo. I was at one time preſent when the black governor thought it neceſſary to hang a few of his men, as he told me that they had ſtopt work, and he went out and immediately had ſeveral put to death, and after that he ſaid he found that the reſt went to work exceedingly good humoured. This ſhews the miſerable ſituation of the blacks there, and I do on my conſcience believe, that this meaſure is not only the death warrant to all our poſſeſſions in the Weſt Indies, but to the perſons of the white men of every deſcription in the iſlands.

"I fear I have taken up much more of the time of the Houſe than my conſequence in it can have allowed me, but it has been from the duty which I felt, ſtrongly and warmly to oppoſe this moſt dangerous meaſure. In doing it, Sir, I can have but one intereſt. I am acting, not in furtherance of the deſigns of the great maſs of my conſtituents; I have no intereſt of the ſmalleſt kind in the iſlands, but I ſhould be ſorry that a meaſure ſo deſtructive ſhould paſs, without doing every thing in my power to oppoſe it. I know I ſhall not be greeted when I retire from the Houſe by popular thanks, as they will be applied to an honourable member who has been ſo conducive to the proſecution of this plan. I have fulfilled an unpleaſant, but a moſt conſcientious taſk, which I truſt will always be the caſe as long as I retain my ſeat in this Houſe."

Mr. T. W. PLOMER.—"There is not a man in this Houſe, or out of this Houſe, more the avowed advocate of juſtice and humanity than I am. If the queſtion were now, whether we were to reſort for the firſt time to the African trade, I ſhould hold up my hand againſt it. Far

different

different are my feelings now, for (among other matters of information derived from our experience) we have found, that the importation of ſlaves is neceſſary to the cultivation of our iſlands in their preſent ſtate of improvement. I find alſo, that we have £100,000,000 of property involved in the fate of the colonies, and that theſe ſettlements take from us one-third of our exports. Thus ſituated, it is a queſtion of gratitude, as well as of humanity, and it becomes an important ſubject of enquiry, not only in what degree Africa will be affected, but to what extent the colonies and the mother country will be concerned in this meaſure; for whatever may have been ſaid about the independence of the iſlands, or of Great Britain, with regard to this trade, I am of opinion, that the proſperity both of the one and the other, is materially implicated in it.

" The noble Lord who propoſed this queſtion has aſſumed that the Weſt India part of the queſtion was not to be conſidered, as if we were called upon to diſcontinue the trade to Africa, without attending to the effect of its ceſſation upon our Weſt India property, or upon the revenue reſulting from that property. I wiſh, with all my heart, I could have ſeen the queſtion in the ſame light with the noble Lord.

" It is true, Sir, that the queſtion has been long under diſcuſſion: it is nearly twenty years ſince it was introduced; I ſay, Sir, nearly twenty years ſince the legiſlature expreſſed an opinion againſt the abolition of the Slave Trade, on the grounds on which I oppoſe it; and it becomes us to examine, if the circumſtances were then the ſame as they are now, or if the iſlands be in a different predicament, ſo as to juſtify a deviation from our former policy. Are the minds of the negroes diſſimilar at this day to what they were at that time? Are they better prepared for the decencies of civilization and for the bleſſings of liberty? No, Sir, they continue in the ſame ſtate of degradation, and in the ſame incapacity for the higheſt enjoyments of rational man. Then, Sir, in reſpect to juſtice, if we look to that juſtice by which the legiſlature of a great country ſhould be directed, it ſhould neither be local nor partial, and above all, it ſhould include in it that juſtice

tice which is due to the colonies under its own immediate protection.

" This, Sir, is not a queſtion of common regulation. The colonies have been ſettled, and in the contract with the ſettlers there was an implied condition, which ought to be held ſacred, that they were to be allowed the means of cultivating their lands.

" If it turn out that this trade is contrary to juſtice, then I admit, that the mother country has a right to judge of the propriety of its continuance; but it can only do this on a plan of indemnity towards thoſe who are injured by any alteration in the ſcheme of national policy. The Weſt Indians have been juſtly repreſented as among the moſt loyal of the Britiſh ſubjects: they have borne quietly taxation to a great extent, and they have a right, not only to our juſtice, but to our compaſſion. If they ſhould entertain a different opinion from that which is now acknowledged by the Britiſh parliament, let us recollect, that it was but a ſhort time ſince we concurred with them in ſentiment.

" But, Sir, is it right, conſidering how far the Weſt India colonies are concerned, for us to incur all this danger? However juſtifiable or reaſonable it may be in other times to make ſuch changes, this ſurely is not the moment in which they ought to be hazarded. We are now in the fifteenth year of a war, which in its circumſtances has been in many reſpects novel, and in proportion to its novelty, it has been fatal to the intereſts of Europe, and of mankind. We are not, Sir, as formerly, fighting for power and dominion, but we are defending our liberty, and protecting our exiſtence. We find it neceſſary to ſtrain every nerve, and to bring every reſource into activity, in order to maintain our cauſe. We find, notwithſtanding all the arrangements which political ingenuity has deviſed, that it is difficult to place new burdens upon the country, without bearing down its ſtrength; and in this alarming ſituation, we are now called upon, for the ſake of this project, to riſk £100,000,000 of capital, and almoſt one-third of the national revenue. We are going to hazard the loſs of theſe colonies, which have employed ſo many ſeamen, ready for the ſupply of our navy, when the ſervice requires it for public defence.

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" The danger of the preſent meaſure conſiſts in giving to the negroes an idea of liberty, which they do not know how to employ. If the meaſures ſuggeſted laſt year had been followed up, I mean that no freſh ſhips ſhould have been allowed to enter into the trade, operating in the form of ſuſpenſion rather than of abolition, then you would not have introduced thoſe abſtract notions of liberty, which will be ſo prejudicial to your repoſe.

" Having ſtated, to the beſt of my ability, what appear to me to be the fatal conſequences of this meaſure, I do moſt earneſtly entreat, that it may not be carried into effect without great conſideration. It may be ſaid, that the queſtion has been ſo long agitated, that it became proper to bring it to a determination, and it was feared, that the ſuſpenſion would prevent the final abolition. For my part, I do not think the friends of the abolition would have been diſappointed, and I believe their deſign would have been accompliſhed, under much leſs unfavourable circumſtances.

" By what I have ſaid, it cannot be my expectation to alter the deciſion of the Houſe, but thus much it was neceſſary for me to obſerve in the faithful diſcharge of my duty as a member of parliament."

Mr. BARHAM.—" Sir, it is impoſſible for me to remain intirely ſilent, after what has fallen from the honourable member oppoſite to me, (Mr. H. THORNTON). According to him, the colonies are inhabited, not by human beings, but by monſters unworthy of the Britiſh name. The honourable gentleman begins his ſpeech by ſtating, that the labour of the negroes was greater in the Weſt Indies than in any other ſituation. I venture, Sir, to commit whatever reputation I may have, to the correctneſs of the aſſertion, and to the affirmation, that they do leſs than many claſſes in this country, and I call down upon myſelf the cenſure, the condemnation, and the contempt of the Houſe, if that ſtatement be not true; and I cannot help thinking, that he will deſerve ſome blame for having ventured ſuch bold aſſertions on inſufficient grounds.

" Next, the honourable member ſaid, that the negroes during crop were allowed to reſt from their labours only for about five or ſix hours. The negroes engaged at one time

time in the ſugar works are few; on a large eſtate, perhaps twenty, is as great a number as is employed. The proportion, however, is ſmall, compared with thoſe who are engaged in the labours of the field, and therefore what has been ſaid, cannot apply to the great body of the blacks. But if the honourable member would have liſtened to the voice of reaſon, inſtead of attending to theory, he would have found, that in the Weſt Indies there are only twelve hours of day light: out of which, half an hour is allowed for breakfaſt, and an hour and a half for the other meals; ſo that upon the whole, the labour does not amount to twelve hours in each day.

" Then the honourable member goes on to ſay, that the negroes work only by compulſion, that they are driven by the laſh. It is certainly the caſe that they are put to work every day, and that behind them ſtands a perſon who is called the driver, with the emblem of authority round his neck; but I beg leave to affirm this, that it is, I will not ſay, never uſed, but that it is uſed moſt unfrequently. It is more like the mace before me, which was originally carried as a weapon of defence, but becauſe it is borne upon the ſhoulder of the officer, is it to be ſuppoſed that it is now made uſe of to knock down the people in the lobby? If that were not the fact, we know that by law no driver is permitted to execute ſevere puniſhment upon the ſlaves, the inferior white ſervant cannot do it unleſs it be ordered by the overſeer of the eſtate.

" In order to leſſen the fatigues of the ſlaves, I endeavoured to ſubſtitute what is called taſk-work, and that appeared to be much more humane, and more conformable to our feelings; but the negroes would not ſuffer it, they would not agree to the plan, and when I attempted to carry it through by force, I could not do it, and was ſtopped by the fear of a rebellion, ſo much did they prefer working under the old plan.

" The honourable gentleman has alſo affirmed (and that he has had ſuch information I cannot doubt) that women are forced to labour when they are even eight months advanced in pregnancy, ſo that it often produces abortion. But the fact is, that there are no ſuch things as abortions in the iſlands. I have ſcarcely ever heard an inſtance

inſtance of it, the conſtitution of the women, is, I ſuppoſe, more robuſt. The infants die perhaps from diſeaſes, but abortion is very unfrequent. I deny the fact, I contradict the fact, that the women are worked when they are ſo far advanced, for it is univerſally the caſe, that as ſoon as a woman is known to be pregnant, all idea of labour from her is at an end, and if that be not the fact, I am content to ſtand committed upon it.

"Next the honourable member aſſerts, that the blacks have no civil rights. I would aſk him if he has read the civil code for the government of the iſlands; and does he not know that a white man may be puniſhed for the ill-treatment of his ſlave, and that ſuch proſecutions have happened? Does he mean to deny that the negro has civil rights, which if he be injured he may put in force, and that the perſon injuring may be puniſhed even with death?

"With reſpect to what has been urged of the property which the ſlaves have, it is certain that they do poſſeſs a great deal of property, and that what they collect in their life-time, they tranſmit to their deſcendants. I have known many negroes who, although they were worth 2 or £300, would not buy their freedom.

"As to negro teſtimony, I ſhould be glad if the honourable gentleman would ſuggeſt any plan whatever, by which it might be admitted, for it would rejoice me exceedingly to try it, and to communicate to the negroes the right of giving teſtimony; and I appeal to any man, if it is fair upon the facts I have ſtated, to apply to any particular claſs of men the indignation of the Houſe."

Mr. THORNTON (to explain).—"I riſe, Sir, merely to explain what I ſaid when I addreſſed the Houſe. Firſt, as to the work which the negroes perform. I did not mean to ſtate that ſlaves in general had only five or ſix hours reſt; but I ſaid, that I underſtood them to labour from an hour before ſun-riſe till an hour after ſun-ſet. My information on this point is derived from a perſon who has been an overſeer for a conſiderable number of years; and I ſtated alſo, that the labour was performed in a climate very unlike that of the country, and which

muſt be allowed to make a great and material difference. It is admitted that twenty perſons are neceſſary for conducting the buſineſs of the ſugar works in crop time; but as theſe are changed during the night, at midnight, of courſe there are forty perſons on every eſtate, who during a great part of the year are deprived of half their natural reſt: and forty forms a very large proportion indeed of the able-bodied labourers on ordinary eſtates. With reſpect to their working under the whip, the honourable gentleman has compleatly admitted what I ſtated in my obſervations to the Houſe. As to the ſtate of the pregnancy of the women, I meant merely to ſay, that all claſſes of ſlaves were worked hard, and among the reſt, the women; and according to the beſt teſtimony—on the authority even of a planter who is now in this Houſe (Mr. FULLER), that women continued to be worked in many caſes to the ſeventh or eighth month of their pregnancy. It was not my intention to ſtate that the ſtroke of the whip was unceaſingly inflicted upon the ſlaves, but that they are liable to the laſh, and that they are conſtantly impelled by it to their work; and that, conſequently, they are ill-treated, I have aſſerted, and will aſſert again and again. As to the fact of the frequency of abortions, it is ſupported by a hoſt of the moſt reſpectable teſtimony, and repeatedly ſtated as a cauſe of decreaſe even by the legiſlature of Jamaica, in its report on the ſubject. I give the honourable gentleman at the ſame time credit for ſparing the women on his eſtate.

"As to the third point, on the ſubject of civil rights, their ſtate I affirm to be, that they can neither contract, nor be contracted with; that they can neither ſue nor be ſued. That they have property I do not doubt, but that the law does not protect them in the poſſeſſion of it, and that it may be ſeized to anſwer the debts of the maſter wherever it can be found, is certain. On the ſubject of the criminal code, as to what has been offered by the honourable gentleman when he told us that they were protected in the hardeſt caſes, I do aſſert, that it is much the ſame as if they were not protected at all; and I humbly ſubmit, that in what I have ſtated upon theſe points, I have ſaid nothing but what may be eſtabliſhed on the beſt authority."

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Mr. Secretary WINDHAM.—"It would little become me to enter into a diſcuſſion of facts of which I have but a very imperfect knowledge, but I cannot help obſerving that an honourable member (Mr. THORNTON) who lately addreſſed you, is not exactly correct. He is correct as to the letter, but not as to the ſpirit. The honourable gentleman ſaid, that the negroes were called to work before day-light, and were ſent back from their labour after ſun-ſet. That repreſentation would convey to us here, the idea of a very long duration of labour, for it did not at firſt occur to me, and perhaps not to others, that the day there was not more than twelve hours.

"The honourable gentleman ſtated alſo, what indeed we all knew before, that theſe men work under the whip. Working under the whip, although ſo dreadful in terms, may be very different in practice; for the ſuffering of the labourer depends upon the more or leſs cruel uſe which is made of this inſtrument. Working under the whip is no doubt a ſtate of degradation, and ſo certainly is that of a ſlave: it is to be in the ſituation of horſes, (here a general cry of hear! hear! hear! from the members in favour of the abolition, in all parts of the Houſe). I ſay, Sir, it is to be in the ſituation of horſes, which are very much expoſed to much wanton ſeverity; but it may be of conſequence to aſcertain in a queſtion of this kind the degree of cruelty exerciſed. For what purpoſe is ſuch an argument uſed by honourable gentlemen? This proves, they ſay, the miſerable condition of ſlavery. But is it ſlavery which they are going to aboliſh? They may hope, as I hope, that theſe or other meaſures may lead to that concluſion, but they have not, in attending to the policy of this bill, had ſuch a ſubject immediately in contemplation.

"To take the part of thoſe who are advocates for dealing in human blood, for violence and murder, may be a formidable thing; but what is it that the friends of the abolition propoſe? How is it even that they mean to cultivate the iſlands? Is it not by ſlaves, and by ſlaves whoſe progeny is to be condemned to the ſame melancholy ſtate of ſervitude? When they are reaſoning againſt the condition of ſlaves, therefore, they ſhould re-

member, that we are not upon this inquiry, but that we are excluſively applying ourſelves to the expediency or inexpediency of the abolition of the Slave Trade. In the mean time, ſlavery inſtead of being aboliſhed with the trade, is in ſome ſort confirmed; for one argument in favour of the policy of this bill is, that ſlaves will continue to labour, and that their offspring will multiply in the Weſt Indies. Then, although we have heard a great deal as to theſe high ſounding facts, yet it will be confeſſed, that they have no direct reference to the queſtion before the Houſe.

" Nothing in the world can ſhew, that ſlavery is not a ſtate of degradation. Every man muſt wiſh it to be aboliſhed, extenſively as it prevails now, and I declare myſelf to be as little friendly to the continuance of ſuch a claſs in ſociety, as any of the honourable gentlemen whom I now oppoſe. It is bad for the ſlave, it is pernicious to the maſter; and it has been well ſaid, that the man who has loſt his liberty, has loſt half his virtue. The poet in the paſſage I allude to adverts to the tendency of ſuch a ſituation to deſtroy all the manly and generous emotions in the human mind. But let us not be hurried away by enthuſiaſm miſapplied: although the Slave Trade has this effect, and muſt be acknowledged to have it by all mankind, yet it operates in different degrees in different countries, and in different times, and my notion of its effect in the preſent ſtate of the Weſt Indies, is founded on the teſtimony now on the table of the Houſe. Speaking on the authority of this evidence, I do believe that the condition of ſlaves is far more favourable, and that their treatment is far leſs tyrannical than it was many years ago upon the broaching of this queſtion, and judging, as we are allowed to do, from the theory of the thing,

" The facts we have heard too might have therefore been ſomewhat overſtrained in order to ſupport the inferences. It is triumphantly equired, what ſecurity have they for their property? Why, none, and as ſlaves they will have none. Is it nothing that we know in point of fact that ſlaves have conſiderable property; and it being the general opinion that it ought not to be violated, it

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is protected by that public opinion. Sir, with all the boaſted liberty of the inhabitants of this country, we do not mean to ſay, that the poor enjoy all the rights which the powerful and the opulent poſſeſs.

" It is indifferent to me, for the part I take in this queſtion, whether ſlavery be a good ſtate, or a bad ſtate. A good ſtate it cannot be; but whether it be good or bad, it is a ſtate which equally remains after the paſſing of this bill; ſo do not let gentlemen, becauſe they talk of the whip, and of the abſence of all law in ſuch a ſtate of ſociety, imagine, that they have diſpoſed of every queſtion on the policy of the meaſure. The whip and the inequality of rights, either in point of fact, or from neceſſity, belongs to ſuch a condition, and theſe will probably continue as long as ſlaves conſtitute a diſtinct order in ſociety.

I was doubtful, Sir, if I ſhould trouble the Houſe with any obſervations this evening, ſince the declaration of my opinion on a former night has perhaps ſufficiently anſwered my purpoſe; and I certainly ſhould not have expreſſed my ſentiments, were it not for the ſake of thoſe who concur with me in opinion. Yet there is ſomething of fortitude in meeting the queſtion in our preſent hopeleſs ſtate, and I am ſure there is ſomething of ſacrifice in ſtanding up on an occaſion of this kind, ſo contrary to the general ſenſe of Parliament, and to the conviction of thoſe with whom, in general, I act. Indeed it is a ſituation ſo diſagreeable, that my diſinclination to it can only be conquered by a ſuperior ſenſe of duty.

" But there is a little perſonal intereſt, which every man has who has ſtated the reſults of his opinions, in laying down the ground of thoſe opinions, and eſpecially on a ſubject of this peculiar nature; for during the great adjourned debate which has continued for ſo many years, it has been the practice to repreſent this queſtion as a conteſt between duty and honour on the one ſide, and intereſt and diſgrace on the other; and as dividers are in this caſe chuſers as well as on other occaſions, they give to themſelves all the duty and all the honour, and to the contrary ſide all the baſeneſs. When men are ſo fearful of ſeparating intereſt and duty, while we are in ſearch

of

of the motives of men, it is natural to enquire on which ſide the intereſt, and on which the duty lies; whether the intereſt be ſacrificed to duty by the ſame perſons, or whether intereſt and duty be not in diſtinct hands; for ſelfiſhneſs itſelf may ſacrifice another's intereſt in the purſuit of its own duty. I hope I am not deſtitute of generous feelings, but I muſt own I always did perceive, that there was a great deal too much of this cheap virtue in the world; I have found men were abundantly ready to ſatisfy their conſciences, and to perform great acts of virtue and heroiſm, when they did it at no expence of their own. Here too, we have energetic appeals to the natural ſympathies and moral ſenſibilities of man, and I have acknowledged, that no man can look to the Slave Trade, and not be deſirous of its abolition, if he be not powerfully influenced by other conſiderations independent of theſe moral impreſſions. There are a number of men who do avail themſelves of this wonderful diſplay of liberality and virtue, as a cover for all their vices, as charity, we are told from high authority, covereth a multitude of ſins. They do not ſay, as in ſacred writ we are told of the phariſee, we are not extortioners, and the like, but on the contrary they ſay, we are extortioners, &c. reſembling this publican, yet we have haſtened the abolition of the Slave Trade, and we look for mercy at the throne of grace. When I reaſon in this manner againſt ſuch habits of mercenary pride, I do not mean to diſcourage the noble and generous reſolutions of a mind rightly formed. I proteſt then againſt all theſe pretences to diſintereſted duty on the one ſide, and againſt all theſe charges of turpitude on the other, and I conſider the claim to general humanity and liberal virtue, to be equal on both ſides.

"Under theſe circumſtances, having ſettled the point reſpecting ſuch high pretenſions, I ſay that, I am obliged to look to the ſtate of our colonial eſtabliſhments, to the peculiar ſtate of this country, to the great intereſts concerned in the queſtion, and, without any unneceſſary ſqueamiſhneſs, I am obliged to draw from theſe important conſiderations, the rule of conduct by which I ought to be guided in my ſearch after public ſecurity and national proſperity.

proſperity. In oppoſition to this guide which I propoſe to myſelf, the friends of the abolition ſtate, that their ſenſe of duty is abſolutely compulſory, and that none of the conſequences, however fatal to the intereſt of the empire, are to be taken into conſideration. If you modeſtly aſk them if the trade may not continue under certain limitations in reſpect to the mode and the time, they will haſtily interpoſe, and inquire, if we are to commit robbery: ſo that if it were the caſe, that in this abolition not a ſlave leſs were to be tranſported from Africa (and certainly not a ſlave leſs will be exiled from that continent) if, in addition to this it were known, that the meaſure would be ruinous to the colonies, if it were deſtructive of our marine, and ultimately of the kingdom, ſtill they would ſay, that it was their duty to aboliſh the Slave Trade, and aboliſhed it muſt be at all hazards. They do not ſay, that this is their *caſe*, but they ſay, that this is their *duty*. They tell you indeed, that their caſe is very different, that the abolition of the Slave Trade will be beneficial to the colonies; that it will be advantageous to Africa as well as to this country; but they add, that if the reverſe of all this were true, their conduct muſt be the ſame; the trade muſt be aboliſhed, although they were buried beneath the ruins, in conſequence of this extraordinary change in national policy. If that be ſo, all queſtion about conſequences might as well be ſpared; but I muſt avail myſelf of what is called the *argumentum ad hominem*, and I muſt take the liberty of ſaying, that theſe gentlemen do not abide by their own rule, for the rule extends to the abolition of ſlavery, as well as to the abolition of the Slave Trade. And here I join iſſue with them; but I think I may venture to defy them to ſhew me, that the Slave Trade can be ſo contrary to the law of God that you can indulge no opinion about it, and yet, that ſlavery is not oppoſed to the ſame divine law. They aſk what right have you to go to the Coaſt of Africa, and tranſport to foreign climes the natives of that continent? And now, Sir, we are on the queſtion of right, I would aſk, what right theſe friends of the meaſure have to prevent the trade? Is the right to which they pretend, founded either on the law of the land, or on the law of nations?

nations? It is not on the law of nations, for however barbarous may be the nature of their government, nations have their independent rights, whether Kien Long, or any other chief, preſide in their communities.

"It may ſtill be ſaid, that although theſe ſtates are in a condition of the moſt beaſtly barbariſm, and in conſequence are diſpoſed to ſell their fellow-ſubjects to us, yet we have no right to purchaſe them. To thoſe who authorize and ſanction an inſtitution in which ſlavery is admitted, where is the wrong? And if we authorize the eſtabliſhment of ſlavery in our iſlands, how can we decently affect to countervail the proceedings in the ſlave-markets of Africa. In both, on their argument, it muſt be equally violence, robbery, and murder. Suppoſe a perſon to go to the black merchants upon the coaſt, and enquire, "What right have you to ſell this perſon whom you offer me?" The merchant anſwers, "I bought him," or "I bred him, and he is my ſlave." "But what right have you to keep him in a ſtate of ſervitude?" "He is mine by the ſame right by which you retain your ſlaves in the Weſt-Indies."

"I am arguing hypothetically, but thoſe who are tolerating a ſyſtem of ſlavery in the Weſt Indies, how can they ſay, that this trade is unlawful upon the coaſt of Africa, eſpecially when that ſyſtem of ſlavery has not only originated, but has been progreſſively ſupported by this trade. However ſtrong the argument may be when employed by others, how can they pretend to ſay, that to continue this trade is to be guilty of violence, robbery, and murder.

"In Ruſſia the cuſtom has been, to have ſlaves attached to the ſoil; but in whatever way you diſpoſe of them, whether with or without the territory upon which they labour, they are ſtill ſlaves. Do not let us, on a queſtion of this kind, improperly blend practical convenience with theoretical right. It was ſuggeſted by Mr. BURKE to make the ſlaves, as in Ruſſia, attached to the ſoil; but how does he, in that way, get rid of the right?

"I am, Sir, accuſed of making nice diſtinctions, but I can find no diſtinction between the inſtitution of ſlavery

and

and the ſelling of ſlaves. On this occaſion, at leaſt, the nicety of the diſtinction is with them, for I can perceive no difference: I think if the one be contrary to the law of God, the other muſt be ſo. But does this exceſſive extravagance of diſtinction end here? Sir, we have refinement upon refinement, until all reaſon ſeems to be loſt: but remember, it is not mine. Here we are told to diſtingiſh between the ſame ſlaves in one place and in another place; it is a ſort of geographical morality for which they contend. I do not know that it is intended to hinder the ſale of ſlaves in the Weſt Indies, and being ſo ſold to prevent their tranſport from iſland to iſland. Thus you ſee, that if you croſs the great ocean, then ariſes all the moral guilt. As long as it circulates in the Weſt only, it is not material, and no crime is perpetrated. Like the electric fluid, as long as it paſſes over the ſame ſubſtance, it is not pernicious, but when darting from ſubſtance to ſubſtance, then it is deſtructive. How can you reconcile theſe inconſiſtencies? How can it be ſaid, that what is criminal on one ſide of the atlantic is innocent on the other? The paſſage by ſea does nothing as to the theoretical right. Is it to be endured, that we ſhould be told the moment we croſs the ocean, then the practice is contrary to the law of God, as if the law of God were not eternal and immutable; and as if it were to be perverted by the accidents of latitude and longitude.

"Theſe are the diſtinctions which they have had the goodneſs to make for me; I, who am the refiner according to their account, cannot diſcover any difference at all. I ſay this applies to their theory, and they juſtify themſelves in aboliſhing the Slave Trade, while they are admitting the continuance of ſlavery.

"Although I have troubled the Houſe at ſome conſiderable length, yet I have not ſaid a word as to the deciſion of the principal queſtion.

[A general ſmile was at this moment obſerved to illumine the countenances of the members; in ſome the feeling was expreſſed by an audible laugh]

"I have been only oppoſing this bar which you have set up. 'Fiat juſtitia ruat cœlum.' 'Let juſtice

take place, although heaven fall. And until I had removed this maſſive bar, I could ſay nothing. The Slave Trade is bad, as the inſtitution of ſlavery itſelf is bad, and no further. Slavery muſt have been known at all times, and in every nation, and whether it ſhall now be aboliſhed is a queſtion of expediency merely. I moſt heartily join in the commendation that has been applied to Dr. Paley's production on the principles of modern philoſophy, and I call it an ineſtimable work. Although he has ſaid nothing that was not known before, yet he has laid down the principles of morals ſo clearly, and on ſuch ſure foundations, that the ſyſtem has now become eaſy to the apprehenſion of every one; so that what was before unknown is at this day familiar to all of us. But I do not ſet his authority up, either for or againſt ſlavery, becauſe I am not aware that he has given any opinion upon the ſubject."

Mr. WILBERFORCE.—" Yes, he has."

Mr. Secretary WINDHAM.—" I did not know it. What againſt ſlavery?"

Mr. WILBERFORCE.—" Yes."

Mr. Secretary WINDHAM.—" I heard the opinions of my gallant relation with pleaſure, both from the attention with which they were heard, and the manner in which they were delivered. The queſtion he ſaid is this, "What is the quantum of good I am to do by this meaſure? This quantum is to be my guide in determining one way or the other." I would make no diſtinction between black happineſs and white happineſs, and when I am arguing upon this principle of utility, I conceive myſelf to be as much on the ground of morality as thoſe on the other ſide the queſtion; and here I conceive the advantage to be completely with me. If I were to aſk the gentlemen who oppoſe me, why they did not aboliſh the whole of the Slave Trade and Slavery itſelf, they would anſwer with reſpect to the latter, what I contend with regard to the former. The evils would be intolerable.

I would

I would not do what they did in France: they ſaid, "I care not what are the conſequences, we muſt admit the ſtrict rule of right; let the blacks be free;" and the effects of this determination, we all of us know. They then, when the queſtion is applied to the ſtate of ſlavery itſelf, take into their conſideration the conſequences; and unleſs they can ſhew that their principles of moral duty are confined to the Slave Trade in Africa, and are not to extend to ſlavery in the Weſt Indies, or to ſlavery all over the world, they muſt admit me to take into contemplation the conſequences, and muſt not monopolize this privilege to themſelves. All I contend is, that I am let into the conſideration of conſequences, and this is the firſt thing to attend to, as it ſtrikes me. The honourable gentlemen ſay, that upon this ground there is no difficulty, for all lies one way, it is beneficial to Africa, to the Weſt Indies, and to this country.

"Now there, Sir, we differ. I hope it is as they ſay, but I fear it is not. I fear the benefit to Africa will be nothing, and that to the iſlands it will be nothing; that the meaſure will be a ſource of miſery, and that there will not be leſs ſlavery within or without the Weſt Indies. I am of opinion, that with reſpect to Africa, the Abolition of the Slave Trade here, inſtead of producing any mitigation of its ſufferings, will greatly encreaſe them. With regard to the Weſt Indies, I will not go into that part of the ſubject. We have heard the repreſentations made by perſons much better qualified than I am, and what I have to ſay to them is this, that they excite my fears. I hope that the diſcontents to the extent that have prevailed in Saint Domingo are little within the ſcope of probability, but that this bill will produce great individual loſs, there can be no doubt, without adverting to the queſtion of legiſlating for others. Perſonal ſuffering, attended with great injuſtice, is no trifling conſideration. If this country, upon general principles of duty and honor, do introduce great changes in its commercial policy, nothing can be more unjuſt than that the loſſes ſhould fall upon individuals, inſtead of devolving upon the country at large, and I am not ſure, if I correctly underſtood an honourable friend of mine, when I

ſuppoſed him to have ſaid, that a perſon exerciſing an unjuſt trade, was not intitled to compenſation. Did he mean that any one was to ſuffer a diſadvantage from an expoſt facto law?

"The danger, I fear, is not very far diſtant: I mean, that in the time of peace, whenever that ſhould arrive, all our apprehenſions will be realized. We will ſuppoſe that it ſhould ſo happen, that France (and we may fairly admit ſuch a ſuppoſition) will not follow this ſplendid and honourable example, and ſhe has pretty clearly declared, that ſhe would not. Suppoſe ſhe and other nations continue this trade without reſerve, and double it or treble it, in proportion to their means, are we then prepared to ſay that we have done any good? Should we not rather hereby admit, that we had done much harm both to Africa and to the Weſt Indies, and that we had expoſed ourſelves to great danger? Are we hardy enough in ſuch circumſtances to declare, "Let the tempeſt deſcend, let the empire of Britain fall?"

"When the queſtion was argued before, we were in a ſituation of unexampled proſperity. We had then no great competitors to contend with; but we are not in that ſtate now. Are we at this moment ſecure either within or without? Are we not ſinking under the burdens which are neceſſarily impoſed upon us, and are we not endeavouring to extricate ourſelves from them at every turn? It is ſaid, that we are not able to find reſources competent to anſwer the public demands. For what purpoſe are thoſe extenſive reforms in finance, which my noble friend (Lord HENRY PETTY) is ſo induſtriouſly preparing? Why is it, but becauſe we are unfortunately engaged in an indefinite war? You have now at laſt got to my candle ends and cheeſe parings. We are told, that all extravagance ought to be cut down, that we are reduced to the laſt effort; and can we think, under ſuch circumſtances, with indifference, of throwing away thus laviſhly the capital and revenues of the country? We never expected to ſee the general demolition of great political inſtitutions in our own time; yet have we not ſeen kingdoms and empires, anciently eſtabliſhed, falling before us like nine-pins, and might not we ourſelves be placed

placed in the ſame melancholly ſituation if it were not for the aſſiſtance of our commercial navy, and for the protection of our marine? I and my friends may, perhaps, live to ſee if theſe calamities await us; I may be wrong, but I cannot help indulging my fears.

"I am not endeavouring to gain opinions, but I am trying to ſtate what is right, and I deny the principle of morality for which they contend, that leaves to us no option; and I ſay, that if this principle be applicable at all, they do not act upon it, for to carry it to its extent: they muſt argue for the abolition of ſlavery itſelf. The government of this country has not adopted any ſuch ſyſtem of rigid morality; we have many thouſand black ſoldiers ſubſervient to us. The legiſlature ſanctions this, and the men are bought at ſo much a head like cattle. Upon the principle of theſe gentlemen, how can they juſtify ſuch proceedings? I ſay they are capable of vindication, for I contend that we muſt, in ſome degree, conform to what is eſtabliſhed. Would they pretend, that by an act of Parliament we ſhould ſay, that all the blacks in the Weſt Indies were free? Theſe men too have the privilege of fighting the battles of the country. Dr. Johnſon ſaid that a ſhip was a jail, with the additional miſchief of the chance of being drowned. Theſe are ſlaves, with the additional miſchief of the chance of being killed. The whole then of theſe arguments, as referable to the Slave Trade, are a mere mockery, as long as you admit of the exiſtence of ſlavery.

"Still, Sir, that I may not here expoſe myſelf to the ſhafts of my competitors, I will make another obſervation. They ſay, "Will you do no good, becauſe you do not accompliſh all good?" But I argue, that their principle does not admit of this objection. I ſay that I do meet the queſtion upon the only ground on which it can be encountered, and I enquire which is the way in which I can avoid the greateſt evil, and in which I can promote the greateſt portion of good?

"As to the paſſions and ſympathies, all muſt feel alike on this ſubject. I admire as much as any man the generous emotions by which ſome young members of this Houſe have been influenced, but at the ſame time I may

lament

lament that ſuch impreſſions ſhould have obſcured their judgment. I do not apply this remark to my noble friend near me, (Lord HENRY PETTY) young in age, but old in wiſdom; but I do apply it to ſome honourable youths who have taken the other ſide of the queſtion, and who would aboliſh the trade at all hazards, without condeſcending to examine the pernicious effects of ſuch a meaſure. As to the abolition of the trade, the attempt is vain. We may withdraw from our ſhare in it, but this is no abolition, it is no diminution of it, the reſignation of our part of it will only contribute to its increaſe.

"The poſition maintained by honourable gentlemen, leads inevitably to the conſequences I have ſtated. In the extenſive views they have taken, I do not recollect that they have attended to the condition of ſlavery in the empire of our auguſt ally. The wealth of a Ruſſian nobleman conſiſts in his ſlaves; he counts not his acres but his dependants. I think the gentlemen do not ſay that they will go to war with Ruſſia as the champions of freedom, to prevent this condition of ſervitude ſo derogatory to human nature, but their principles lead to this; and if any of them ſhould come into poſſeſſion of an eſtate in Ruſſia, they muſt ſet their ſlaves at liberty. Whatever rigid notions of morality they might apply, in the event of obtaining an inheritance of this kind on the Imperial territory, they do not ſeem inclined to make the ſame ſacrifice of their property in the Weſt Indies.

"Theſe, Sir, are my opinions, and I ſincerely hope that this foreboding of mine will never be juſtified by the event. If this meaſure be in the reſult beneficial, I muſt, in fairneſs and candour hereafter, acknowledge, that I have had no ſhare in promoting it, and if it be followed by any of thoſe fearful conſequences I have apprehended, I ſhall, at leaſt, be free from all culpability in accelerating theſe calamities."

Mr. SHERIDAN.—"Sir, I ſhould have been ſorry if the preſent queſtion had paſſed off without my having had an opportunity of expreſſing my great ſatisfaction in the total and immediate Abolition of the Slave Trade. I ſhould however have been content to ſtate merely my ſatisfaction,

ſatisfaction, had it not been for ſome arguments which have fallen from my right honourable friend near me, (Mr. WINDHAM) which render it impoſſible for me not to make ſome obſervations. My right honourable friend has made a very learned, a very eloquent, a very luminous, and a very perſuaſive ſpeech; but it has this character, that he ſpent an hour and a half in proving what was never diſputed, namely, his right to conſider the conſequences of the abolition; but when he came to ſtate what thoſe conſequences were to be, he ſummed them up in two ſhort ſentences: he ſaid, that the meaſure would produce no good to the African, but the deſtruction of the Weſt India iſlands, and the ruin of the navy; and then he ſays, "Is it right that this ſhould be the caſe?" I ſay, "Certainly not;" and yet he does not give the Houſe an atom to prove, that thoſe conſequences will take place. He certainly had a right to conſider the conſequences of the abolition, and I ſhould have imagined, that he would have thought it proper to employ ſome part of his eloquence to prove, not only that they would probably happen, but that they were moſt likely to follow.

"But to intereſt the feelings of the Houſe, he not only ſays that theſe conſequences will follow, but he endeavours to place us in a deſponding ſtate of mind, and then he ſays, "Here you are oppreſſed with deſpondency." Sir, I never heard my right honourable friend uſe this ſort of language before. I have heard him upon other occaſions employ a very different kind of eloquence when the proſpect of affairs was alarming, and then he told us, that we were not even ſcratched by the war. There he ſhewed no deſpondency, for in that inſtance he told us, that we might carry on the war to an indefinite period, without any cauſe for fear or trepidation.

"My right honourable friend ſeems to me to have been in a conſiderable dilemma upon this ſubject, and has not taken the beſt opportunity to adviſe the Houſe, that the abolition ought not to take place; but he ſeems to have acted, at preſent, rather to diſcharge a duty he felt to his own mind, than to do any good to the cauſe which he undertook. He has choſen exactly the time when his

arguments

arguments, upon the queſtion, would have leaſt weight, and has poſtponed his obſervations, till it was impoſſible to ſerve the ſide which he ſupported, and then to have adduced thoſe arguments which would do the leaſt harm to the cauſe which he oppoſed. If he had come forward before with his reflections, it might have done us ſome harm, but as he was determined only to relieve his mind, he deferred them to that time when they could be of no uſe. He argues the queſtion, as if it were a determination of thoſe who wiſh for the abolition of the Slave Trade to continue ſlavery; but I, on the contrary, truſt, that the effect of the abolition of the Slave Trade will be the abolition of ſlavery itſelf. "What!" ſays he, "do you declare that the trade is contrary to humanity, and do you not think that ſlavery is againſt humanity, juſtice, and ſound policy?" I join, Sir, with him in the argument, and I ſay, that if we do not go on with what we have thus begun, we do nothing. But why will he make us blend two things which are in themſelves perfectly diſtinct; one which is in our power now, the other which is not in our power, but in our hopes?

"I would not aſk if power muſt neceſſarily lead to the abuſe of it. Man was not made to be a ſubject of traffic; and what has been ſaid of mercy moſt beautifully by the poet, that "Mercy is twice bleſſed," may be truly applied to deſpotiſm, that deſpotiſm is twice curſed; it curſes him that poſſeſſes it, and curſes him that is the ſufferer under it. I look at this meaſure but as the preamble, and as the only proper preamble to the entire abolition of ſlavery. If you aſk me why I do not inſtantly comply with my feelings, and aboliſh ſlavery, I tell you that I do not, becauſe it is not in my power. When I attempt to aboliſh the Slave Trade, I do what is in my power; I alſo do an act of juſtice and humanity; and ſuppoſing I had not the ſame certainty of doing an act of policy, yet, if we injure the plantations, all that remains to do is, to repair them; and if we hurt the intereſts of the Weſt India merchants, at leaſt we have it in our power to make them a full compenſation.

"Therefore, Sir, I am ſure of three things: firſt, the juſtice of my cauſe; ſecondly, the humanity of it; and thirdly,

thirdly, that I am at leaſt riſking an experiment upon good grounds of hope, and upon accurate calculations made by a right honourable ſtateſman, now no more, (ſo correct in his enumerations, that he ſet his figures to muſic,) who proved that the planters would not be loſers by the abolition. I have every hope that they will not be loſers by it; but if they ſhould, I know that we have it in our power to make them remuneration.

"My honourable friend ſays, "Why do you aboliſh the trade only? Why do you not put an end to ſlavery at once?" My friend only uſes this argument, becauſe he can find no better; for we begin with that which is in our power, and we are not to be deterred from doing ſo by ſuch ſort of reaſoning.

"There are other points in the argument of my right honourable friend to the ſame effect, upon which I ſhall not touch, excepting to ſay, that I ſhall think this meaſure to be ineffectual, unleſs it ultimately lead to the abolition of ſlavery in general. Before we proceed further, however, let us ſee what is the effect of this bill upon the minds of thoſe who are moſt concerned by it; I mean the planters of our iſlands. If they ſhall at length find that they have been miſtaken, and foreſeen evils which never were to ariſe; if they diſcover that their condition is ameliorated, and not injured, they may be reconciled to the preſent meaſure. But would you now preſs upon them a new propoſition, for which they are totally unprepared? I cannot help hoping that the time will come, when the abolition of ſlavery will take place, and when the planters of our colonies will be brought to a diſpoſition to forward, and not to obſtruct the meaſure.

"I truſt, Sir, that the time will come, when the gentlemen of the Weſt Indies, for whom I have the greateſt reſpect, and who poſſeſs as large a ſhare of humanity as any other men in the united kingdom, will be undeceived, and that one of the effects of this bill will be, to make them feel that it is a duty impoſed upon them to conſult the happineſs of their fellow beings: when the negro ſhall no more groan under the ſevere laſh of the driver; when a driver ſhall no longer be conſidered neceſſary, but it will be the buſineſs of the planter to attend himſelf to the

treatment which his ſlaves receive, and when he will view them in the light of human beings. I think, Sir, that there cannot be a ſtronger inſtance to ſhew the great ſeverity under which the negroes ſuffer, than that mentioned to-night by a friend of mine, (Mr. BARHAM,) than whom there is no man for whom I have a higher reſpect.

"To be ſure," ſays he, "the driver does carry a whip, but then what is its uſe? It is only the badge of his office, juſt as your mace, Sir, is upon the table. But I wiſh, moſt ſincerely, that thoſe cruel implements could be brought before the Houſe. But he went on to ſay, that the whip is never uſed as an inſtrument of cruelty. That, Sir, it muſt be ſeen, will depend upon the mode in which it is employed. It is inflicted juſt in the ſame way, ſays my right honourable friend, (Mr. WINDHAM) as it would be upon horſes, after a cruel or merciful manner, according to the diſpoſition of the perſon who wields it. But how could he, with all his feeling, ſubmit to a compariſon of human beings with the brutes of the creation?

"It is, Sir, impoſſible to urge this point further. But the right honourable gentlemen ſay, that humane laws have been paſſed for the protection of negroes againſt the barbarity of their maſters, by which any perſon cutting, maiming, or mutulating a negro, is now liable to the penalty of £100 currency, or about £57 10s. of our money. From murder, he tells you that the negro is abſolutely out of danger, for there was once a perſon of great reſpectability, who, for murdering his ſlave, was obliged actually to go out of the way: he was ſent to Coventry, it ſeems, for murdering a ſlave!

"But, Sir, there is another argument to which I will juſt advert. Nothing can be ſo diſagreeable as, upon a queſtion of this nature, being compelled to enter into that ſort of argument of what we ſhall gain by the Weſt-India iſlands, and what we ſhall loſe? But if we are forced to come to that, if we are obliged to enter into ſuch a diſcuſſion, let us do it. When, however, we come to ſee what the arguments are, we find that all we obtain from them is wealth, that is furniſhed to us by the deſtruction of our ſpecies. Put then into one ſcale the opulence

opulence we derive from our poſſeſſions in the Weſt Indies, and into the other the expences we are at in the protection of our iſlands from our enemies abroad, and from the enemies that we are conſtantly creating in the iſlands themſelves, the loſs we ſuſtain in Britiſh blood among the ſoldiers that we diſpatch there but who never return, and likewiſe the diſcouragement which that muſt be to our own countrymen to enter our ranks, to ſerve their king and country in the Britiſh army: I wiſh my friend had taken that into his conſideration. Let him look at the returns of the mortality of our troops in the Weſt India iſlands. If he examines them, he will find ſuch a ſcene of deplorable miſery, as would juſtify me in ſaying to the Weſt Indians, Give me back the ſons of their country who have been tranſported thither, and I will reſtore to you all the wealth that you have ſent here.

"Much as has been ſaid upon that ſubject, I ſee no apprehenſion of the ſeparation of the Weſt India iſlands from this country; for where are they to go for protection when they have quitted us? Even ſuppoſing that not to be the caſe, I think too well of their loyalty to imagine for an inſtant, that they would be guilty of ſuch an act: But putting their loyalty out of the queſtion, we know that their ſtate only exiſts at the will of the maſters of the ſea, for the maſters of the ſea muſt alſo be the maſters of their ſoil, and therefore, if they deſert, where can they look to? They can turn their eyes to no country but England, and therefore to ſuppoſe that they would attend neither to their duty, their loyalty, or their intereſt, is to queſtion their underſtanding and their honour.

"With regard to the dread of inſurrections among the blacks there, that is in my opinion of all apprehenſions the idleſt. Are they really ſo degraded by their ſituation, ſo reduced to that laſt ſtate of degradation, as to ſee their brethren dragged to the ſhores of our iſlands with pleaſure? It is impoſſible; I do not believe the fact; on the contrary, it is my firm opinion, that they will receive this bill as a pledge that their condition will be more conſidered hereafter; for we cannot but deteſt the principle upon which they have been dragged to our iſlands. But have they ſhewn diſcontent under our government during

the long twenty years that the abolition has been the ſubject of diſcuſſion? If ſuch a diſpoſition had prevailed, would not it before now have made its appearance? Would not rebellion and inſurrection have been excited, when expectation of the paſſing of this bill long ſince was diſappointed? And for my own part I am free to ſay, I conſider it as a diſgrace to the Britiſh Parliament, that it has not already been acceded to."

Lord CASTLEREAGH.—"There is no ſubject in which I have ever taken a part, reſpecting which I have felt greater pain and anxiety than that now under your conſideration. I feel that I am running counter to all the impulſes of my heart. I have certainly, on former occaſions, not leſs than on the preſent, had the additional pang of differing from thoſe with whom I have had the cloſeſt union of opinions in public life. If I have acted on ſuch occaſions with independence, the Houſe, I truſt, will think that my ſentiments are thoſe of conviction, and of conviction alone.

"In addition to the uneaſineſs which the agitation of the preſent queſtion has excited, I have the pain of reflecting, that any interference of mine can be of no ſubſtantial utility, and I ſhould have come forward at an earlier ſtage, if I could have perſuaded myſelf, from what I obſerved to be the ſentiment of the Houſe, that in ſtating my opinions I was likely to induce parliament in any degree to abandon the meaſure. But I did perceive during the laſt ſeſſion, that there was a growing tendency to adopt it, both in the legiſlature and in the country, ſo that it was out of the power of an individual, to oppoſe any effectual impediment to the current which appeared to be reſiſtleſs. I have ſatisfied my own judgment that this is a ſtep which the moral feelings of the country and of parliament have determined to take, that they have concluſively decided in favour of the meaſure, whether wiſe or unwiſe, and that the experiment muſt at all hazards be tried. The only feeling upon which I could be ſuppoſed to give oppoſition to this meaſure was, a full perſuaſion upon my mind, that the principles on which my honourable friend (Mr. WILBERFORCE) adopted it, were not thoſe which were likely to forward the object he had in view. I know that he

has

has devoted a long and laborious life to attain that end, (and he could not bring his ability into action without ſome conſiderable effect,) but I thought he did all this in a manner which was likely to defeat his own purpoſes. He has waſted fourteen or fifteen years in perſuading this Houſe to make an experiment, which, if reſorted to, will not be attended with the ſalutary conſequences he propoſes; on the contrary, I certainly do look with a very gloomy feeling to the effect. Not that I apprehend that ſerious national injury which many have predicted, but I think that my honourable friend is now commencing an experiment in which he will waſte many more years, at the end of which he will find that he has not accompliſhed what he deſired.

" I ſhall ſhortly ſtate the principle upon which my mind is ſatisfied that this meaſure will not forward the cauſe of humanity; and with all his good intentions, I think that my honourable friend has not taken the extenſive view neceſſary to the ſucceſs of his own object. I think that my honourable friend has been more diſpoſed to conſider this as a national queſtion, than as a queſtion in the ſhape in which it ſhould be fairly exhibited; as that ſyſtem upon which this country ſhould act to promote the greateſt amount of human happineſs, and to diminiſh as much as poſſible the quantum of miſery in the world.

" It is impoſſible for men to differ in reſpect to the evil itſelf particularly contemplated in this meaſure. If we were to name the greateſt affliction which belongs to ſociety, we could mention none more oppreſſive than that which places human creatures in ſuch a ſtate of degradation as the Slave Trade. Still, however, though I may be wrong in my view of the ſubject, I think that the practical reſult of the meaſure will be ineffectual to any valuable purpoſe, and there is no man more anxious for ſucceſs in this reſpect than I am; but the ſtrong conviction of my mind is, that after doing great violence to the feelings and intereſts of the Weſt India planters, after ſhaking their attachment to their country, we ſhall make them breakers of the law inſtead of doers of the law, that we ſhall convert them into ſmugglers, and drive them to that, to which at preſent they are diſinclined. After this bill has paſſed, I think

think the deaths in the middle paſſage will be multiplied, for the ſlaves have been tranſported from Africa with leſs loſs of life by Britiſh ſhips, than by thoſe of any other nation. With reſpect to the general amount of Africans exported from the coaſt, taking together the periods of peace and war, their number will in no degree be diminiſhed, and all the advantages of our humane regulations to prevent that miſery which has been ſo juſtly complained of during the voyage, will be ſurrendered.

" The difficulties alſo which the abolition may occaſion, may deteriorate that part of the Weſt Indies in which the new cultivation has taken place, and in the end it may drive ſuch improvements from our own iſlands into others. Into our own iſlands ſlaves will ſtill be imported, though it may add to the price, becauſe you are going againſt the intereſt of the planter and againſt the local authorities there. Thus, Sir, the political reſult of the experiment will be loſt.

" Now, Sir, I muſt ſhortly ſtate to the Houſe, that I think my honourable friend (Mr. WILBERFORCE) has argued this queſtion on a narrow and unfair principle, becauſe it has generally been contended, that if you can ſatisfy your mind that there was an exiſting population adequate to the ſupport of its own numbers, then all motive for the continuance of the trade would ceaſe, and the abolition might be adopted. I have always been diſpoſed to think, that if it were true that the population could be thus kept up, ſuch a fact would not go to the propriety of the meaſure; I mean in point of humanity. Although it is true, that my honourable friend may ſhew, that particular iſlands have kept up their population, yet he cannot, with the ſame ſucceſs, repreſent that each particular eſtate has maintained its numbers. Now the redundancy of one eſtate does not circulate to the others, and it has ſtruck me, that if the population were generally kept up, yet that by this internal variation, much miſchief muſt be done; for there is no ſituation ſo bad as where the negroes are overworked on account of the diminution of the hands employed.

" Another effect of this meaſure will be, that the negroes will be carried to Demarara and Surinam, rather than to the iſlands. I am not ſo much in love with this mode

mode of applying Britiſh capital, as to wiſh that much more ſhould be ſent to the colonies of our enemies. But this muſt be the conſequence of throwing embarraſſments in the way of the trade of our own iſlands, and adding to the difficulties of extending their cultivation. Here, Sir, I muſt look at it in a national point of view, and it preſents to me a very ſerious proſpect, for if we are to carry our wealth from our own iſlands to cultivate the territory of other powers, we ſhall be conſiderable loſers by the tranſition. Then you will not only narrow your own ſtrength and reſources, but you will furniſh your enemies with the means of effecting your deſtruction; you will be feeding his naval and colonial power more effectually, than by any means of which he can avail himſelf in any other quarter of the globe.

" I do not know that the danger of giving additional force to the maritime power of the enemy is ſo ſerious as to be ſufficient to interfere with the faithful diſcharge of any acknowledged moral duty; but I have never heard my honourable friend (Mr. WILBERFORCE) fairly conteſt this part of the queſtion, and ſay that there was in this caſe a moral duty ſo imperative as to preclude any conſideration of expediency.

" I am prepared to ſay, Sir, that the acts of the Britiſh parliament cannot regulate the extent of the productions of nature: that muſt be governed by events beyond our controul; and in proportion as the demand increaſes for any particular article of produce, new tracts of land will be ſubmitted to cultivation ſomewhere. Now, I think, my honourable friend will admit that there is no government in the world which will permanently deal with dependencies upon the ſame liberal principles as the parliament of Great Britain; and if he drive the planters to ſeek the protection of other governments, he only renders the commerce they require leſs likely to be liberally conducted. It is impoſſible for me to think that Spain, Holland, or Portugal, would equally conſult the principles of humanity in the management of this traffic, and I think my honourable friend will not flatter himſelf from the nature of the communication from the French government to our miniſter there, that any ſatisfactory expectation can be

be formed of the co-operation of that power in ſuch a cauſe. If my honourable friend expect better conduct from Spain, let him learn to regulate his views from the laws of that country for the adminiſtration of the government of her colonies. If he expect better conduct from Portugal, let him attend to the avidity with which they are endeavouring to turn their capital to that trade. If he expect better from Holland, at leaſt he will not think that there will be any improvement on her part while under the dominion of France. If he wiſh to judge of the effect of his own experiment by that which has been tried with the planters of St. Croix, he may learn, that they have had as many negroes in that iſland ſince the prohibition by the Daniſh government as they had before, and all the difference is, that they have received them by ſmall and inconvenient, inſtead of large and commodious veſſels. If this be a true deſcription of the courſe of things, by this meaſure, inſtead of advancing general happineſs, my honourable friend will do a great injury to the cauſe of humanity; and inſtead of having a large extent of cultivation on our own iſlands, he will weaken the controul of the Britiſh parliament; and he will throw all the advantages into the hands of other governments, who will be leſs attentive to their moral duties.

" But as I have ſaid before, I think that the ſyſtem is ineffectual to its object, and that my honourable friend has ſet out upon a plan that will defeat his own deſigns. My honourable friend, inſtead of ſetting this example to other countries which they will not follow, ought to have joined with them in putting down a common evil. He has taken his meaſures ſo unfortunately, that inſtead of producing a general concurrence with other nations, he has held out a bounty to them to take up what Great Britain muſt reſign. If France were a power which you could tempt to any negociation upon ſuch a ſubject, we ſhould have ſaid, " Let us adopt a common ſyſtem;" but every chance of this kind is ſurrendered. My honourable friend has thrown out of his hand the means; he has removed the ground of aſſociation, for he has ſaid, " I will make the whole of the ſacrifice."

" But

" But it may be obſerved, that if I object to this meaſure, to what other ſhould I be diſpoſed to reſort? To this I anſwer, that I would not in dealing with the colonies, take up too ſtrong a principle of legiſlation, becauſe I think ſuch a ſtrong principle will diſappoint its own object, and I certainly muſt look to the meaſure with great apprehenſion, becauſe, if the parliament be to follow up theſe projects, it is placing itſelf in the ſerious ſituation of legiſlating againſt the local intereſts of the colonies. Whatever may be the local rights, and I do not ſay that you cannot legiſlate internally for the colonies, yet of this I am ſure, that if you will have to contend againſt all the local feelings, it will be a moſt up-hill work, and you can have no ſecurity for the execution of your laws. Upon what principle does my honourable friend take up the prohibition as the inſtrument of his benevolent purpoſes? He may prevent Britiſh ſhips from going from Liverpool and other ports of the kingdom for the conduct of this trade, but he cannot prevent Britiſh ſubjects and Britiſh capital from carrying it on under the flags of other powers, as under thoſe of Portugal or any other independent ſtate. I am diſpoſed to admit, that in time of war, it may be poſſible for the maritime power of this country, to throw impediments in the way of this trade, but the ſlaves, inſtead of being conveyed in Britiſh ſhips, may be obtained from the neighbouring iſlands of other powers, and thus the trade will be indirectly ſupported.

" It is ſaid, that you cannot accompliſh your deſign, namely, that of bringing up the population to its proper ſtandard, unleſs you make it the intereſt of the planter to breed ſlaves inſtead of buying them; and if my honourable friend had taken it up on this principle, by uſing all means to make that the intereſt of the planter, then he would have followed a different courſe, and he would not have introduced thoſe impediments to the trade which are immediately calculated to defeat his own purpoſes. By increaſing a duty progreſſively upon the importation of ſlaves, the object would be anſwered, but now he has gone to the prohibition at once. The other would have been an additional motive to increaſe the breed of ſlaves, and in conſequence, to diminiſh the importation.

" I perceive that the Houſe is anxious to proceed to the deciſion, and I will not fruſtrate its wiſhes. If I had addreſſed you earlier I ſhould have ſtated at length my arguments; but I have ſeen ſo preponderating an opinion in favour of the queſtion, that I have not been inclined to oppoſe the impulſe of the public feeling, and if my vote could have occaſioned the determination to be different, I would rather have withheld that vote than have reſiſted the general opinion.

" I do not however augur favourably of the experiment. I think my honourable friend, with the beſt intentions, has waſted a great deal of precious time on the ſubject, and I think, that after the trial of ſome years, he will find that he has been wholly diſappointed."

Mr. WILBERFORCE.—" I truſt that the Houſe, now the bill has arrived at the laſt ſtage, will permit me to trouble them with a few words on this ſubject, for after what has been ſaid by my noble friend, it is almoſt impoſſible for me to ſuffer the queſtion to go to a diviſion, without ſaying ſomething upon it. In the firſt place, I beg leave to call the obſervation of the Houſe to the ſtate in which at length we now find ourſelves. It now is the queſtion, whether the Slave Trade ſhall be immediately concluded, or continued as long as there is an acre of uncultivated land in any of the iſlands in our poſſeſſion to cultivate. Now, let the Houſe ſee what it is they are called upon to decide; let them look to the extent to which the arguments of my honourable friends would carry them. In Jamaica alone there are 900,000 acres of land yet uncultivated, and to bring which into a ſtate of tillage, would require at the uſual rate of importation more than a million, or about 1,200,000 negroes, and no leſs a period than two hundred and forty years. In Trinidad, the calculation would nearly amount to the ſame, there being more than 800,000 acres of land not yet brought into culture. Thus about two millions of human beings would be neceſſary to be tranſported thither, and no leſs a length of time than 480 years would be completed, before the object deſired by the gradual abolitioniſts would be attained, and till then, according to them,

them, the Slave Trade ſhould continue. But the Houſe will not permit the Slave Trade to go on, on any ſuch principles, for it is impoſſible for them not to ſee the real amount and tendency of ſuch arguments.

" But one of the honourable gentlemen have denied a great principle upon which we have mainly reſted the queſtion ; I mean that the Slave Trade produces innumerable acts of cruelty and barbarity in the interior of Africa. He, however, only argued in generals, and he dextrouſly avoided deſcending to particulars, becauſe it was impoſſible for the honourable gentleman to go into the proof of them, for he muſt have known, that not only thoſe who ſupported, but thoſe who oppoſed us, all agreed that wars in Africa were occaſioned by the Slave Trade. Mr. Bryan Edwards ſtated in the cleareſt and ſtrongeſt manner in his ſpeech, which I have now before me, delivered in the Aſſembly of Jamaica, that ſuch was the fact, and he ſaid that I had been correctly informed reſpecting the African part of the caſe. He had made it his buſineſs, by converſing with his own negroes, to aſcertain the fact, and he obſerves, that to ſay that the ſlaves conſiſted only of convicted criminals was impoſſible to be believed ; was insult and mockery.

" The effects of this traffic on the continent of Africa have, in general, been as little controverted as the facts which prove its enormity ; and as to the effects which the abolition may produce in the Weſt Indies, though this has been more a ſubject of controverſy, yet I think it will admit of the moſt ſatisfactory proof that, inſtead of being injurious to the planters, it will be one of the greateſt benefits to them which could be imagined.

" But then, ſays my right honourable friend, " You are not conſiſtent in your proceedings. If you acted conſiſtently with your profeſſed principles, you would emancipate the ſlaves in the Weſt Indies." That argument I think was fully anſwered by another gentleman, but permit me to ſay a word upon it for myſelf. I do look forward with great expectation to a change, a moſt happy change, in the ſtate of the ſlaves in conſequence of this meaſure. But then that change cannot be inſtantaneouſly effected. And becauſe it cannot, becauſe you cannot put an end

to all exiſting evils at once; are you to put an end to none? Suppoſing that a perſon by an extremity of ill uſage, by the moſt ſevere cruelty, had been driven to madneſs, that he had been forced into a dungeon, and was reduced to ſuch a ſtate, that exiſtence ſeemed no longer a bleſſing, but a burthen. Suppoſe that I had diſcovered his wretched ſituation, and that I was to ſay to my right honourable friend, "Let us ſend for a phyſician, that he may take into his conſideration the unhappy caſe of this victim. By proper treatment, we may perhaps hope to ſee him reſtored to his ſenſes, and put into a capacity of enjoying his freedom." "No," ſays my right honourable friend, "you muſt do complete juſtice, you muſt releaſe him immediately; I will be no party to ſuch a dereliction of principle." And yet would not ſuch an immediate releaſe be both unjuſt and injurious to himſelf, and perhaps to many others who might be injured by his being let looſe on ſociety? Juſtice ſurely would require that we ſhould firſt prepare him for the enjoyment of liberty, and then, after he was fitted for its reception, might freedom be given him.

"My noble friend ſays, I apprehend that no good at all will be done by the bill, becauſe the ſlaves will ſtill be ſmuggled clandeſtinely into the iſlands, and the planters will obtain a ſupply as readily as if the trade had been continued." It is curious enough to hear this kind of reaſoning from one who has ſo ſtrongly oppoſed the American intercourſe bill, on the ground that the prevention of the importation even of articles of the firſt neceſſity from America into our iſlands was practicable by revenue regulations. If ſo, may not the introduction of ſlaves into our iſlands be prevented in the ſame manner, and much more eaſily. But then, ſaid another of my honourable friends, the ſame introduction of negroes which you cannot prevent by abſolute prohibition, you may prevent by impoſing a high duty. In anſwer to this argument, I muſt beg to aſk the Houſe, if it is not clear that it is infinitely more difficult to prevent the abuſes of a particular practice, than to put a ſtop to it intirely? On our plan, a ſlave ſhip, if found in any of our iſlands after the paſſing the bill, or on the coaſt of Africa, or on the intermediate voyage, may be

be captured. But on the plan of my honourable friend, the ſhip may paſs ſafely through all the preceding ſtages of her courſe without any diſturbance, and would incur no riſk except in the attempt to avoid paying duties, by ſmuggling the ſlaves aſhore. Is it not obvious that this ſmuggling would be more difficult when the trade was wholly prohibited, than when it was permitted on the payment of a duty?

" My noble friend next ſays, that before we brought in the bill, we ſhould have conſulted France, Spain, Portugal, and Holland, and have brought them over to the meaſure; whereas now, the bill will be ineffectual, as they will continue to carry on the trade. This, Sir, is really more than one can well bear; it is really too much, Sir, that one of the very perſons who has been preeminent in producing the long delay, ſhould not only ſay this, but that he ſhould at the ſame time aſſert that it is impoſſible for us to obtain the concurrence of any foreign country. Sir, I do not deny that there was a time, when if we had acted according to the dictates of conſcience, we might have obtained the concurrence of foreign nations, when they would have given us credit for the purity and uprightneſs of our motive, and then they might have been ready to have coincided with us; but that they will do ſo now, I am not ſo ſanguine as to hope at leaſt to the ſame extent, although I believe that even the effect of this great example will not be loſt.

" With reſpect to another point which has been much inſiſted on, I mean the inſurrections which are likely to ariſe in the Weſt Indies, I ſhall think it right to ſay a few words; and though I maintain, that if you were deviſing the beſt means to prevent inſurrections, the firſt ſtep you ſhould take ought to be to aboliſh the Slave Trade, yet under all the circumſtances of the caſe as it now ſtands, I dare not be ſo ſanguine as to think that inſurrections may not occur in the iſlands, and particularly in that of Jamaica, where the importations have lately been very large. It ought to be mentioned, that in St. Domingo the inſurrection was preceded by great importations, and I confeſs that I am not without my fears of a danger of this kind; but at the ſame time I am comforted by the conſideration, that,

that, even during the time when the greateſt ferment might have been expected, I mean while the diſcuſſion has been going forward in parliament, no diſturbance has taken place. The agitation of the queſtion was what ſeemed moſt likely to have produced the miſchief, and no miſchief having been produced by it, we may hope that the effect will not be ſuch as is dreaded by ſome gentlemen. But if there be any truth in theſe apprehenſions, what but abſolute neceſſity would make us proceed with the trade, when the blacks are already ſo numerous, that they could, at any moment they think proper, take the power into their own hands?

"My honourable friend (Mr. H. THORNTON) has already ſhewed the Houſe from the Roman Hiſtory what was the effect of a ſimilar meaſure to this upon the ſlaves of that empire, and I cannot help thinking, that the effect will be the ſame in the Weſt Indies. Neither my noble friend (Lord CASTLEREAGH) nor my right honourable friend (Mr. WINDHAM) in all that they have addreſſed to the Houſe, have ſaid one ſyllable to ſhew any reaſon why the ſlaves ſhould not encreaſe in the Weſt Indies, a climate as favourable to population as that of America; where ſo great is the increaſe, that they are found to double their numbers in the courſe of twenty-four years. My proſpects, as to the effect of this bill for the abolition of the Slave Trade, are very extenſive; and though I cannot diſcharge my mind from all fear of poſſible inſurrection, yet I think, that the concluſion of the trade is the meaſure which is moſt likely to prevent that dreadful iſſue, while it produces the happieſt effects in a variety of directions. And, Sir, when we conſider what the proſpect before us in conſequence of this bill now is, I cannot think, now that we are about to witneſs the termination of our labours, that nineteen years have been loſt in endeavouring to obtain the deſired object. I truſt, Sir, that the time will come, when we ſhall diſcover that the period employed in endeavouring to reſcue a whole continent from the greateſt evil by which it could be afflicted, and which has prevented civilization from penetrating and enlightening not only its receſſes, but even its outſkirts, has not been ſpent entrely in vain. The endeavour to repair our

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paſt wrongs to Africa by giving up our ſhare of this deteſtable trade, is moſt meritorious; and if the other great nations of Europe ſhall not be inclined to follow our example on the grounds of humanity and juſtice, yet ſtill, if they conſider their own intereſts, they will coincide with us, in either not reſuming the traffic at all, or in totally relinquiſhing it; and I cannot help thinking, that the more we ſhall attend to improve the condition of Africa, now that the bar to the civilization of that continent is removed, the more we ſhall conduce to our own commercial proſperity and true happineſs.

" As to the re-conſideration of this ſubject, which has been ſo ſtrenuouſly recommended, we muſt be aware that the reconſideration of plain moral ſubjects often ariſes from a wiſh to find arguments which may help us to eſcape from the conſcientious ſcruples we may entertain, or to ſuppreſs the honeſt conviction of our own minds.

" To the conſequences of the meaſure on the ſtate of our Weſt India colonies, I look forward with but little anxiety, for let the Houſe remember, that we do not proceed merely upon ſpeculation with reſpect to them, but on calculations which cannot be diſputed. And even if we be thought by ſome to proceed only on ſpeculation, yet let it be recollected, that we are acting in uniſon with the opinion of perhaps one of the ableſt men that ever breathed, and who had turned the whole force of his great mind to the conſideration of the policy of this meaſure, I mean Mr. PITT. Nor is there one man of literary eminence, whoſe judgment has been conſidered of any value in ſociety, but has given his ſanction in favor of the abolition. One honourable gentleman exhorted us in proſecuting this meaſure, to ſeek out the path of duty. We have found that path, and will adhere to it: but if we looked ſolely to conſiderations of intereſt, ſtill we might, with ſafety, put an end to the trade. If we have erred from the right path, we have erred with the greateſt men who ever lived in any age or country. Not only might I enumerate one or two individuals, but I might go on to name almoſt every perſon of conſequence or fame who has written or ſpoken upon the ſubject. Not only might I allude to thoſe, whoſe ſupport I at preſent receive,

receive, but I might alſo enumerate perſons, whoſe writings in later days have adorned, enlightened, or improved ſociety; and it is now that theſe gentlemen, who oppoſe us, come forward to aſſert, that the ſhock this meaſure will occaſion, ought to be gradually adminiſtered. Such, Sir, has been the concurrence my endeavours have met with, that I have even had the ſatisfaction to perceive, that it has had the effect of putting an end to prejudice, and of extinguiſhing the violence of party feeling."

[Mr. WILBERFORCE here alluded to ſome individuals, who had done themſelves immortal honour by their ſtrenuous and perſevering exertions in this great cauſe, on all of whom he pronounced appropriate eulogies; Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, Lord Grenville, the Biſhop of London, Mr. Granville Sharp, Mr. Clarkſon, Mr. Roſcoe the Member for Liverpool, and the different members of the preſent adminiſtration; but in this part of his ſpeech it proved impoſſible to follow him. He concluded with congratulating the Houſe and the country on the adoption of this bill, which he regarded as one of the greateſt ſervices that had been rendered to humanity, and on the general principles which had been avowed as the foundation of the proceeding; and he expreſſed his ſenſe of the obligation under which he, the Houſe, and the kingdom at large, had been laid, by the noble manner in which His Majeſty's preſent miniſters had acted with reſpect to this great meaſure.]

The bill was now read a third time and paſſed, and it was ordered, that Mr. Wilberforce do carry the ſame to the Lords.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

MONDAY, MARCH 23d, 1807.

ON the motion of LORD GRENVILLE, the order of the day for conſidering the amendments introduced by the Houſe of Commons into the bill, for the abolition of the Slave Trade, was read.

After a ſpeech of ſome length from the Biſhop of Landaff, in favour of the bill, and from the Earl of Weſtmoreland againſt, and a few obſervations from the Marquis of Sligo and the Duke of Norfolk, the ſeveral amendments were read and agreed to.

LORD GRENVILLE.—"I now move your Lordſhips, that a meſſage be ſent to the Commons, to ſignify your aſſent to the amendments made by them. Permit me, my Lords, for the laſt time, to congratulate the Houſe upon the completion of one of the moſt glorious taſks that was ever performed for the public benefit."

The motion of Lord Grenville was carried *nem con.*

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